

तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय

VISVA BHARATI  
LIBRARY  
SANTINIKETAN

824.08

T 9

16154





CLARENDON PRESS SERIES

TYPICAL SELECTIONS

FROM

THE BEST ENGLISH WRITERS

*FROM POPE TO MACAULAY*

WITH

INTRODUCTORY NOTICES

2

SECOND EDITION

OXFORD

AT THE, CLARENDON PRESS

M DCCC C IV

*[All rights reserved]*



OXFORD

PRINTED AT THE CLARENDON PRESS

BY HORACE HART, M.A.

PRINTER TO THE UNIVERSITY

# CONTENTS.

ix

|   | PAGE       |
|---|------------|
| <b>XLII. OLIVER GOLDSMITH. 1729—1774</b>                  | <b>169</b> |
| 1. The Political Condition of Sweden, France, and Holland | 170        |
| 2. Dr. Primrose in Prison                                 | 171        |
| 3. Indecencies of Antigallican feeling                    | 173        |
| 4. A General Election                                     | 175        |
| 5. The Sagacity of the Spider                             | 177        |
| 6. Dr. Primrose the Monogamist                            | 180        |
| 7. On National Prejudices                                 | 183        |
| <b>XLIII. EDMUND BURKE. 1729—1797</b>                     | <b>186</b> |
| 1. Peroration of the Speech on Conciliation with America  | 188        |
| 2. The Decay of Chivalrous Sentiment                      | 191        |
| 3. On the Death of his Son                                | 193        |
| 4. The Devastation of the Carnatic                        | 195        |
| 5. Charles James Fox                                      | 197        |
| 6. On his Retirement previous to the General Election     | 200        |
| 7. Lord Chatham   | 202        |
| 8. A Peroration   | 205        |
| <b>XLIV. WILLIAM COWPER. 1731—1800</b>                    | <b>208</b> |
| 1. His Life at Olney                                      | 209        |
| 2. Time an Enemy and a Friend                             | 211        |
| 3. His two Goldfinches                                    | 212        |
| 4. Occupations of Life before the Flood                   | 213        |
| 5. Public and Private Education                           | 214        |
| 6. Johnson's Lives of the Poets                           | 217        |
| <b>XLV. EDWARD GIBBON. 1737—1794</b>                      | <b>220</b> |
| 1. The Age of the Antonines                               | 221        |
| 2. Disbelief of Paganism prevalent in the Roman World     | 223        |
| 3. The Emperor Julian                                     | 225        |
| 4. Mahomet  | 229        |
| 5. The Rise, Progress, and Completion of the great Work   | 235        |
| <b>XLVI. SIR PHILIP FRANCIS—'JUNIUS.' 1740—1818</b>       | <b>242</b> |
| 1. From a Letter to the Duke of Grafton                   | 243        |
| 2. To the Printer of the Public Advertiser                | 247        |
| 3. To his Grace the Duke of Bedford                       | 250        |
| 4. To the Right Hon. Lord Mansfield                       | 252        |

# CONTENTS.

|   | PAGE      |
|---|-----------|
| <b>XLVII. WILLIAM SCOTT, LORD STOWELL. 1745—</b>        |           |
| • 1836 . . . . .  | 258 •     |
| 1. The contract of Marriage . . . . .                   | 259       |
| 2. Places, and Rites, of Sepulture . . . . .            | 260       |
| 3. The Story of an Unhappy Marriage . . . . .           | 261       |
| 4. On Western and Eastern Society . . . . .             | 262       |
| 5. Duty of the Judge in Questions of International Law  | 263       |
| 6. The Law of Marriage . . . . .                        | 264       |
| <br><b>XLVIII. DUGALD STEWART. 1753—1828 . . . . .</b>  | <br>267 • |
| 1. The rapidity of Thought in Interpreting Language .   | 268       |
| 2. Attention and Memory . . . . .                       | 270 •     |
| 3. The Origin of Language . . . . .                     | 274       |
| 4. The Idea of Beauty . . . . .                         | 277       |
| 5. On the Culture of the Imaginative Faculty . . . . .  | 280       |
| <br><b>XLIX. WILLIAM COBBETT. 1762—1835 . . . . .</b>   | <br>284   |
| 1. The Institution of Property . . . . .                | 286       |
| 2. The National Debt and Foreign Politics in 1826 .     | 287       |
| 3. Woodland Countries . . . . .                         | 289       |
| 4. The Potshop. A Fable . . . . .                       | 291       |
| 5. Cobbett's Childhood . . . . .                        | 292       |
| 6. In Newgate . . . . .                                 | 294       |
| 7. Monastic Institutions . . . . .                      | 296       |
| 8. The State of Ireland . . . . .                       | 298       |
| 9. The British Soldier . . . . .                        | 301       |
| 10. To the Labouring Classes of this Kingdom . . . . .  | 305       |
| 11. English Composition . . . . .                       | 307       |
| <br><b>L. SIR WALTER SCOTT. 1771—1832 . . . . .</b>     | <br>310   |
| 1. Sunset in a Storm . . . . .                          | 312       |
| 2. The Discovery of the Tomb of Robert the Bruce .      | 313       |
| 3. The Prayer of Louis the Eleventh . . . . .           | 315       |
| 4. Before the Reading of the Will . . . . .             | 317       |
| 5. The Fisherman's Funeral . . . . .                    | 321       |
| 6. The Trial and Execution of Fergus Mac-Ivor . . . . . | 330       |
| 7. Reflections on his own Life . . . . .                | 336       |

## XXXI.

### ALEXANDER POPE.

1688—1744.

ALEXANDER POPE was born in London in 1688. He was the son of a linen-draper who had made some fortune in that trade. In childhood he was noted for the sweetness and gentleness of his temper—qualities which certainly did not distinguish his later years,—for the beauty of his voice, and for his manual dexterity in writing. At eight years of age he began Latin and Greek at the same time under a Romish priest named Taverner, his parents being of that persuasion. He was next sent to a Roman Catholic seminary at Twyford, whence he was removed for a lampoon—one of his first efforts in poetry—on his master.

In 1700, when twelve years old, he retired with his father, who, like other Romanists of the time, was attached to the fortunes of James II, to Binfield, in Berkshire. Here, at this early age, he determined to become a poet. To indulge this passion, he left no calling or profession, as so many have done. He was invariably and solely a poet from the beginning of his life to its end. His *Ode to Solitude* was written when he was twelve, the *Pastorals* at sixteen, and the *Essay on Criticism* at twenty. With the money received for the first books of his translation of the *Iliad* he purchased the villa at Twickenham, which has ever since been associated with his name. Here and in London he lived until the end of his days, at times the foe, but oftener the associate and companion and friend of the wits and men of letters of the day. He suffered through life from physical infirmity and constant ill-health. He died in 1744.

Pope was confessedly the most eminent poet of his age, and he still remains unequalled in his particular style of poetry. Less vigorous and various than Dryden, on whom he modelled himself, he was a greater artist. His life was uneventful, varied only by the successive publication of his poems, and by literary quarrels into which a vain and jealous temperament was constantly leading him. Like Dryden, he modernized stories from Chaucer, wrote satires, and translated a great ancient poet. But in his satires (the *Dunciad* excepted) he is more didactic than Dryden; and in his *Moral Epistles*, and still more in his *Essay on Man*, he aims at the character of a philosophical writer. His translation of Homer, though utterly unlike the Greek in its general features, and far from an accurate representation of it in details, will probably keep his name alive as long as any of his original poems, brilliant and highly finished as these undoubtedly are. His prose writings consist chiefly of one or two prefaces, three or four occasional papers, and a large number of letters, which he elaborated with great care, and contrived to have published during his own lifetime. They are marked by great rhetorical adroitness and dexterity; but there is an absence of ease about them, even when the style is most familiar. Gray, however, himself a delightful letter-writer, said of the letters, that though not good letters, they were better things; while Cowper, on the other hand, thought him the most disagreeable maker of epistles he ever met with.

### 1. Thoughts in Retirement.

You have obliged me with a very kind letter, by which I find you shift the scenes of your life from the town to the country, and enjoy that mixed state which wise men both delight in, and are qualified for. Methinks the moralists and philosophers have generally run too much into extremes in commending entirely either solitude, or public life. In the former, men for the most part grow useless by too much

rest, and in the latter are destroyed by too much precipitation; as waters lying still, putrify, and are good for nothing, and running violently on do but the more mischief in their passage to others, and are swallowed up and lost the sooner themselves. Those indeed who can be useful to all states, should be like gentle streams, that not only glide through lonely valleys and forests amidst the flocks and the shepherds, but visit populous towns in their course, and are at once of ornament and service to them. But there are another sort of people who seem designed for solitude, such, I mean, as have more to hide than to show. As for my own part, I am one of those of whom Seneca says, *Tam umbratiles sunt, ut putent in turbido esse quicquid in luce est.* Some men, like some pictures, are fitter for a corner than a full light; and I believe, such as have a natural bent to solitude (to carry on the former similitude) are like waters, which may be forced into fountains, and exalted into a great height, may make a noble figure and a louder noise, but after all they would run more smoothly, quietly, and plentifully, in their own natural course upon the ground. The consideration of this would make me very well contented with the possession only of that Quiet which Cowley calls the companion of Obscurity. But whoever has the Muses too for his companions, can never be idle enough, to be uneasy. Thus, Sir, you see, I would flatter myself into a good opinion of my own way of living. Plutarch just now told me, that 'tis in human life as in a game at tables, where a man may wish for the highest cast, but, if his chance be otherwise, he is e'en to play it as well as he can, and to make the best of it.

You formerly observed to me, that nothing made a more ridiculous figure in a man's life, than the disparity we often find in him sick and well: thus one of an unfortunate constitution is perpetually exhibiting a miserable example of

*ALEXANDER POPE.*

the weakness of his mind, and of his body, in their turns. I have had frequent opportunities of late to consider myself in these different views, and, I hope, have received some advantage by it, if what Waller says be true, that

The soul's dark cottage, batter'd and decay'd,  
Lets in new light thro' chinks that time has made.

Then surely sickness, contributing no less than old age to the shaking down this scaffolding of the body, may discover the inward structure more plainly. Sickness is a sort of early old age: it teaches us a diffidence in our earthly state, and inspires us with the thoughts of a future, better than a thousand volumes of philosophers and divines. It gives so warning a concussion to those props of our vanity, our strength and youth, that we think of fortifying ourselves within, when there is so little dependence upon our out-works. Youth at the very best is but a betrayer of human life in a gentler and smoother manner than age: 'tis like a stream that nourishes a plant upon a bank, and causes it to flourish and blossom to the sight, but at the same time is undermining it at the root in secret. My youth has dealt more fairly and openly with me, it has afforded several prospects of my danger, and given me an advantage not very common to young men, that the attractions of the world have not dazzled me very much; and I begin, where most people end, with a full conviction of the emptiness of all sorts of ambition, and the unsatisfactory nature of all human pleasures. When a smart fit of sickness tells me this scurvy tenement of my body will fall in a little time, I am e'en as unconcerned as was that honest Hibernian, who being in bed in the great storm some years ago, and told the house would tumble over his head, made answer, What care I for the house? I am only a lodger. I fancy

'tis the best time to die when one is in the best humour ; and so excessively weak as I now am, I may say with conscience, that I am not at all uneasy at the thought, that many men, whom I never had any esteem for, are likely to enjoy this world after me. When I reflect what an inconsiderable little atom every single man is, with respect to the whole creation, methinks, 'tis a shame to be concerned at the removal of such a trivial animal as I am. The morning after my exit, the sun will rise as bright as ever, the flowers smell as sweet, the plants spring as green, the world will proceed in its old course, people will laugh as heartily, and marry as fast, as they were used to do. The memory of man, (as it is elegantly expressed in the Book of Wisdom) passeth away as the remembrance of a guest that tarrieth but one day. There are reasons enough, in the fourth chapter of the same book, to make any young man contented with the prospect of death.—*Letters and Correspondence.*

## 2. Homer and Virgil.

NOTHING is more absurd or endless, than the common method of comparing eminent writers by an opposition of particular passages in them, and forming a judgment from thence of their merit upon the whole. We ought to have a certain knowledge of the principal character and distinguishing excellence of each : it is in that we are to consider him, and in proportion to his degree in that we are to admire him. No author or man ever excelled all the world in more than one faculty, and as Homer has done this in invention, Virgil has in judgment. Not that we are to think Homer wanted judgment, because Virgil had it in a more eminent degree ; or that Virgil wanted invention, because Homer possessed a



larger share of it: each of these great authors had more of both than perhaps any man besides, and are only said to have less in comparison with one another. Homer was the greater genius, Virgil the better artist. In one we most admire the man, in the other the work. Homer hurries and transports us with a commanding impetuosity, Virgil leads us with an attractive majesty: Homer scatters with a generous profusion, Virgil bestows with a careful magnificence: Homer, like the Nile, pours out his riches with a boundless overflow; Virgil, like a river in its banks, with a gentle and constant stream. When we behold their battles, methinks the two poets resemble the heroes they celebrate: Homer, boundless and irresistible as Achilles, bears all before him, and shines more and more as the tumult increases; Virgil, calmly daring like Aeneas, appears undisturbed in the midst of the action; disposes all about him, and conquers with tranquillity. And when we look upon their machines, Homer seems like his own Jupiter in his terrors, shaking Olympus, scattering the lightnings, and firing the heavens; Virgil, like the same power in his benevolence, counselling with the gods, laying plans for empires, and regularly ordering his whole creation.—*Preface to Homer's Iliad.*

### 3. An Author's Defence.

I BELIEVE, if any one, early in his life, should contemplate the dangerous fate of authors, he would scarce be of their number on any consideration. The life of a wit is a warfare upon earth: and the present spirit of the learned world is such, that to attempt to serve it (any way) one must have the constancy of a martyr, and a resolution to suffer for its sake. I could wish people would believe what I am pretty certain they will not, that I have been

much less concerned about fame than I durst declare till this occasion, when methinks I should find more credit than I could heretofore: since my writings have had their fate already, and it is too late to think of prepossessing the reader in their favour. I would plead it as some merit in me, that the world has never been prepared for these trifles by prefaces, biassed by recommendations, dazzled with the names of great patrons, wheedled with fine reasons and pretences, or troubled with excuses. I confess it was want of consideration that made me an author; I writ because it amused me; I corrected because it was as pleasant to me to correct as to write; and I published because I was told I might please such as it was a credit to please. To what degree I have done this I am really ignorant; I had too much fondness for my productions to judge of them at first, and too much judgment to be pleased with them at last. But I have reason to think they can have no reputation which will continue long, or which deserves to do so: for they have always fallen short not only of what I read of others, but even of my own ideas of poetry.

If any one should imagine I am not in earnest, I desire him to reflect, that the ancients (to say the least of them) had as much genius as we: and that to take more pains, and employ more time, cannot fail to produce more complete pieces. They constantly applied themselves not only to that art, but to that single branch of an art, to which their talent was most powerfully bent; and it was the business of their lives to correct and finish their works for posterity. If we can pretend to have used the same industry, let us expect the same immortality: Though if we took the same care, we should still lie under a farther misfortune: they writ in languages that became universal and everlasting, while ours

are extremely limited both in extent and in duration. A mighty foundation for our pride! when the utmost we can hope, is but to be read in one island, and to be thrown aside at the end of one age.

All that is left us is to recommend our productions by the imitation of the ancients: and it will be found true, that, in every age, the highest character for sense and learning has been obtained by those who have been most indebted to them. For, to say truth, whatever is very good sense, must have been common sense in all times; and what we call learning, is but the knowledge of the sense of our predecessors. Therefore they who say our thoughts are not our own, because they resemble the ancients, may as well say our faces are not our own, because they are like our fathers: And indeed it is very unreasonable, that people should expect us to be scholars, and yet be angry to find us so.

I fairly confess that I have served myself all I could by reading; that I made use of the judgment of authors dead and living; that I omitted no means in my power to be informed of my errors, both by my friends and enemies: but the true reason these pieces are not more correct, is owing to the consideration how short a time they, and I, have to live: one may be ashamed to consume half one's days in bringing sense and rhyme together; and what critic can be so unreasonable, as not to leave a man time enough for any more serious employment, or more agreeable amusement?

The only plea I shall use for the favour of the public, is, that I have as great a respect for it, as most authors have for themselves; and that I have sacrificed much of my own self-love for its sake, in preventing not only many mean things from seeing the light, but many which I thought tolerable. . . .

In this office of collecting my pieces, I am altogether uncertain, whether to look upon myself as a man building a monument, or burying the dead.

If time shall make it the former, may these poems (as long as they last) remain as a testimony, that their author never made his talents subservient to the mean and unworthy ends of party or self-interest; the gratification of public prejudices, or private passions; the flattery of the undeserving, or the insult of the unfortunate. If I have written well, let it be considered that 'tis what no man can do without good sense, a quality that not only renders one capable of being a good writer, but a good man. And if I have made any acquisition in the opinion of any one under the notion of the former, let it be continued to me under no other title than that of the latter.

But if this publication be only a more solemn funeral of my remains, I desire it may be known that I die in charity, and in my sense; without any murmurs against the justice of this age, or any mad appeals to posterity. I declare I shall think the world in the right, and quietly submit to every truth which time shall discover to the prejudice of these writings; not so much as wishing so irrational a thing, as that every body should be deceived merely for my credit.—*The Author's Preface.*

#### 4. A Panegyric upon Dogs.

THE loss of a faithful creature is something, though of ever so contemptible an one; and if I were to change my dog for such a man as the aforesaid, I should think my dog undervalued: (who follows me about as constantly here in the country, as I was us'd to do Mr. Wycherley in the town.)

Now I talk of my dog, that I may not treat of a worse subject, which my spleen tempts me to, I will give you some account of him; a thing not wholly unprecedented, since Montaigne (to whom I am but a dog in comparison) has done the same thing of his cat. *Dic mihi quid melius desidiosus agam?* You are to know then, that as 'tis likeness begets affection, so my favourite dog is a little one, a lean one, and none of the finest shaped. He is not much a spaniel in his fawning, but has (what might be worth any man's while to imitate him in) a dumb surly sort of kindness, that rather shows itself when he thinks me ill-us'd by others, than when we walk quietly and peaceably by ourselves. If it be the chief point of friendship to comply with a friend's motions and inclinations, he possesses this in an eminent degree; he lies down when I sit, and walks when I walk, which is more than many good friends can pretend to, witness our walk a year ago in St. James's Park.—Histories are more full of examples of the fidelity of dogs than of friends, but I will not insist upon many of them, because it is possible some may be almost as fabulous as those of Pylades and Orestes, &c. I will only say for the honour of dogs, that the two most ancient and esteemable books, sacred and prophane, extant (viz. the Scripture and Homer) have shown a particular regard to these animals. That of Toby is the more remarkable, because there seem'd no manner of reason to take notice of the dog, besides the great humanity of the author. Homer's account of Ulysses's dog Argus is the most pathetic imaginable, all the circumstances consider'd, and an excellent proof of the old bard's good-nature. Ulysses had left him at Ithaca when he embark'd for Troy, and found him at his return after twenty years (which by the way is not unnatural, as some critics have said, since I remember the dam of my dog was twenty-two years old when

she died ; may the omen of longevity prove fortunate to her successors.) You shall have it in verse.

## ARGUS.

When wise Ulysses, from his native coast  
 Long kept by wars, and long by tempests tost,  
 Arriv'd at last, poor, old, disguis'd, alone,  
 To all his friends, and ev'n his Queen unknown;  
 Chang'd as he was, with age, and toils, and cares,  
 Furrow'd his rev'rend face, and white his hairs,  
 In his own palace forc'd to ask his bread.  
 Scorn'd by those slaves his former bounty fed,  
 Forgot of all his own domestic crew ;  
 The faithful dog alone his rightful master knew.  
 Unfed, unhous'd, neglected, on the clay,  
 Like an old servant now cashier'd he lay ;  
 Touch'd with resentment of ungrateful man,  
 And longing to behold his ancient Lord again.  
 Him when he saw—he rose, and crawl'd to meet,  
 ('Twas all he cou'd) and fawn'd, and kiss'd his feet,  
 Seiz'd with dumb joy--then falling by his side,  
 Own'd his returning Lord, look'd up, and dy'd !

Plutarch, relating how the Athenians were obliged to abandon Athens in the time of Themistocles, steps back again out of the way of his history, purely to describe the lamentable cries and howlings of the poor dogs they left behind. He makes mention of one, that followed his master across the sea to Salamis, where he died, and was honoured with a tomb by the Athenians, who gave the name of the Dog's Grave to that part of the island where he was buried. This respect to a dog in the most polite people of the world, is very observable. A modern instance of gratitude to a dog (though we have but few such) is, that the chief order of Denmark (now injuriously called the order of the Elephant) was instituted in memory of the fidelity of a dog, named Wild-brat, to one of their Kings who had been

deserted by his subjects: he gave his Order this motto, or to this effect (which still remains) *Wild-brat was faithful*. Sir William Trumbull has told me a story which he heard from one that was present: King Charles I, being with some of his court during his troubles, a discourse arose what sort of dogs deserved pre-eminence, and it being on all hands agreed to belong either to the spaniel or grey-hound, the king gave his opinion on the part of the grey-hound, because (said he) it has all the good-nature of the other without the fawning. A good piece of satire upon his courtiers, with which I will conclude my discourse of dogs. Call me a cynic, or what you please, in revenge for all this impertinence, I will be contented; provided you will but believe me, when I say a bold word for a christian, that, of all dogs, you will find none more faithful than—Your, &c.  
—*Letters and Correspondence.*

## 5. Shakespeare.

OF all English poets Shakespeare must be confessed to be the fairest and fullest subject for criticism, and to afford the most numerous, as well as most conspicuous instances, both of beauties and faults of all sorts. But this far exceeds the bounds of a preface, the business of which is only to give an account of the fate of his works, and the disadvantages under which they have been transmitted to us. We shall hereby extenuate many faults which are his, and clear him from the imputation of many which are not: a design, which though it can be no guide to future critics to do him justice in one way, will at least be sufficient to prevent their doing him an injustice in the other.

I cannot however but mention some of his principal and characteristic excellencies, for which (notwithstanding his

defects) he is justly and universally elevated above all other dramatic writers. Not that this is the proper place of praising him, but because I would not omit any occasion of doing it.

If ever any author deserved the name of an *original*, it was Shakespeare. Homer himself drew not his art so immediately from the fountains of nature; it proceeded through Egyptian strainers and channels, and came to him not without some tincture of the learning, or some cast of the models, of those before him. The poetry of Shakespeare was inspiration indeed: he is not so much an imitator, as an instrument, of nature; and 'tis not so just to say that he speaks from her, as that she speaks through him.

His *characters* are so much nature herself, that 'tis a sort of injury to call them by so distant a name as copies of her. Those of other poets have a constant resemblance, which shews that they received them from one another, and were but multipliers of the same image: each picture like a mock-rainbow is but the reflection of a reflection. But every single character in Shakespeare is as much an individual, as those in life itself; it is as impossible to find any two alike; and such as from their relation or affinity in any respect appear most to be twins, will upon comparison be found remarkably distinct. To this life and variety of character, we must add the wonderful preservation of it; which is such throughout his plays, that, had all the speeches been printed without the very names of the persons, I believe one might have applied them with certainty to every speaker.

The *power* over our *passions* was never possessed in a more eminent degree, or displayed in so different instances. Yet all along, there is seen no labour, no pains to raise them; no preparation to guide our guess to the effect, or be perceived to lead toward it: but the heart swells,



and the tears burst out, just at the proper places : we are surprised the moment we weep ; and yet upon reflection find the passion so just, that we should be surprised if we had not wept, and wept at that very moment.

How astonishing is it again, that the passions directly opposite to these, laughter and spleen, are no less at his command ! that he is not more a master of the *great* than of the *ridiculous* in human nature ; of our noblest tendernesses, than of our vainest foibles ; of our strongest emotions, than of our idlest sensations !

Nor does he only excel in the passions : in the coolness of reflection and reasoning he is full as admirable. His *sentiments* are not only in general the most pertinent and judicious upon every subject ; but by a talent very peculiar, something between penetration and felicity, he hits upon that particular point on which the bent of each argument turns, or the force of each motive depends. This is perfectly amazing, from a man of no education or experience in those great and public scenes of life which are usually the subject of his thoughts : so that he seems to have known the world by intuition, to have looked through human nature at one glance, and to be the only author that gives ground for a very new opinion. that the philosopher, and even the man of the world, may be *born*, as well as the poet.

It must be owned that with all these great excellencies, he has almost as great defects ; and that as he has certainly written better, so he has perhaps written worse, than any other. But I think I can in some measure account for these defects, from several causes and accidents ; without which it is hard to imagine that so large and so enlightened a mind could ever have been susceptible of them. That all these contingencies should unite to his disadvantage seems to me almost as singularly unlucky, as that so many various (nay contrary)

talents should meet in one man, was happy and extraordinary. . . .

With all his faults, and with all the irregularity of his *drama*, one may look upon his works, in comparison of those that are more finished and regular, as upon an ancient majestic piece of Gothic architecture, compared with a neat modern building: the latter is more elegant and glaring, but the former is more strong and more solemn. It must be allowed, that in one of these there are materials enough to make many of the other. It has much the greater variety, and much the nobler apartments; though we are often conducted to them by dark, odd, and uncouth passages. Nor does the whole fail to strike us with greater reverence, though many of the parts are childish, ill-placed, and unequal to its grandeur.—*Preface to Tonson Edition of Shakespeare.*

## XXXII.

### LADY MARY WORTLEY MONTAGU.

1689—1762.

LADY MARY PIERREPOINT was born, in 1689, at Thoresby, in Nottinghamshire. Her father, the younger brother of the Earl of Kingston, became, in 1715, by creation, Duke of Kingston. As a child, she was much neglected, but her love of books stood her in place of a regular education. She taught herself Latin, and read widely if not well. In 1712, she married Mr. Edward Wortley Montagu, who had long been attached to her. He was a man of great ability and cultivation, and in 1716 was appointed Ambassador to the Porte. Lady Mary accompanied him, and her impressions of the country, at that period so little known to English travellers, are recorded in the celebrated series of letters, which constitute her chief claim to literary reputation. While at Pera in 1718 she adopted the Turkish practice of inoculation, until that time unknown in Western Europe, for her own son, and was afterwards the chief means of introducing it into England. In 1719 she returned home with her husband. She was received with the distinction due to her talents and acquirements, and renewed her connexion with the wits of the day, among whom was Pope, whose neighbour she became at Twickenham. In 1739, she again left England, and resided chiefly in the North of Italy. She did not return until her husband's death, in 1761, and in the following year she died.

Lady Mary was at one time the intimate friend of Pope, and it is believed that her kindness induced the poet on some occasions to forget his usual caution in his relations with her and to offer her an affection which she could not return. It is certain that the

friendship was succeeded by a violent quarrel, and that for many years Pope pursued his former ally with malignant animosity. Horace Walpole has also assailed her reputation with all the wit and venom which his practised pen could command. Daring, imprudent, and reckless as Lady Mary was, there seems no adequate reason for the attacks to which she was subjected. The circumstances under which she left England and separated from her husband, were perhaps sufficient ground for much that has been said of her. But of these circumstances little is known. The introduction of inoculation into England was perhaps a doubtful national benefit, but Lady Mary is at least entitled to the praise of moral courage for allowing the experiment to be tried on her own son. Her literary merits have perhaps received exaggerated praise. The *Letters from Turkey* are full of brilliancy, sparkle, and vivacity, but they fail to impress a generation familiar with productions of a higher tone. The style of Lady Mary is entirely her own. Less artificial than Walpole's, more sustained than Cowper's, her letters resemble Lord Byron's, more nearly perhaps than do those of any other English writer. There are touches of polished wit worthy of Addison or Steele—descriptive passages of the rarest felicity—shrewd apophthegms recalling familiar sayings in greater authors, scattered abundantly throughout the *Letters during Mr. Montagu's Embassy to Constantinople*.

### 1. Adrianople (from a Letter to Mr. Pope).

I AM at this present moment writing in a house situated on the banks of the Hebrus, which runs under my chamber window. My garden is all full of cypress trees, upon the branches of which several couple of true turtles are saying soft things to one another from morning till night. How naturally do *boughs* and *vows* come into my mind at this minute! and must not you confess, to my praise, that 'tis more than an ordinary discretion that can resist the wicked

suggestions of poetry, in a place where truth, for once, furnishes all the ideas of pastoral. The summer is already far advanced in this part of the world; and for some miles round Adrianople, the whole ground is laid out in gardens, and the banks of the rivers are set with rows of fruit-trees, under which all the most considerable Turks divert themselves every evening; not with walking, that is not one of their pleasures, but a set party of them choose out a green spot, where the shade is very thick, and there they spread a carpet, on which they sit drinking their coffee, and are generally attended by some slave with a fine voice, or that plays on some instrument. Every twenty paces you may see one of these little companies listening to the dashing of the river; and this taste is so universal, that the very gardeners are not without it. I have often seen them and their children sitting on the banks of the river, and playing on a rural instrument, perfectly answering the description of the ancient *fistula*, being composed of unequal reeds, with a simple but agreeable softness in the sound.

Mr. Addison might here make the experiment he speaks of in his travels; there not being one instrument of music among the Greek or Roman statues, that is not to be found in the hands of the people of this country. The young lads generally divert themselves with making garlands for their favourite lambs, which I have often seen painted and adorned with flowers lying at their feet while they sung or played. It is not that they ever read romances, but these are the ancient amusements here, and as natural to them as cudgel-playing and foot-ball to our British swains; the softness and warmth of the climate forbidding all rough exercises, which were never so much as heard of amongst them, and naturally inspiring a laziness and aversion to labour, which the great plenty indulges. These gardeners are the only happy race

of country people in Turkey. They furnish all the city with fruits and herbs, and seem to live very easily. They are most of them Greeks, and have little houses in the ~~fields~~ of their gardens, where their wives and daughters take a liberty not permitted in the town, I mean, to go unveiled. These wenches are very neat and handsome, and pass their time at their looms under the shade of the trees.

I no longer look upon Theocritus as a romantic writer; he has only given a plain image of the way of life amongst the peasants of his country; who, before oppression had reduced them to want, were, I suppose, all employed as the better sort of them are now. I don't doubt, had he been born a Briton, but his *Idylliums* had been filled with descriptions of threshing and churning, both which are unknown here, the corn being all trodden out by oxen; and butter (I speak it with sorrow) unheard of.—*Letter during the Embassy to Constantinople.*

## 2. A Procession to a Turkish Camp.

FROM this place I went, in my Turkish coach, to the camp, which is to move in a few days to the frontiers. The Sultan is already gone to his tents, and all his court; the appearance of them is, indeed, very magnificent. Those of the great men are rather like palaces than tents, taking up a great compass of ground, and being divided into a vast number of apartments. They are all of green, and the *pashás* of *three tails* have those ensigns of their power placed in a very conspicuous manner before their tents, which are adorned on the top with gilded balls, more or less according to their different ranks. The ladies go in coaches to see the camp, as eagerly as ours did to that of Hyde Park; but it is very easy to observe, that the soldiers do not begin the campaign

with any great cheerfulness. The war is a general grievance upon the people, but particularly hard upon the tradesmen, now that the Grand-Signior is resolved to lead his army in person. Every company of them is, obliged, upon this occasion, to make a present according to their ability.

I took the pains of rising at six in the morning to see the ceremony, which did not, however, begin till eight. The Grand-Signior was at the seraglio window, to see the procession, which passed through the principal streets. It was preceded by an *effendi*, mounted on a camel, richly furnished, reading aloud the Alcoran, finely bound, laid upon a cushion. He was surrounded by a parcel of boys, in white, singing some verses of it, followed by a man dressed in green boughs, representing a clean husbandman sowing seed. After him several reapers, with garlands of ears of corn, as Ceres is pictured, with scythes in their hands, seeming to mow. Then a little machine drawn by oxen, in which was a windmill, and boys employed in grinding corn, followed by another machine, drawn by buffaloes, carrying an oven, and two more boys, one employed in kneading the bread, and another in drawing it out of the oven. These boys threw little cakes on both sides among the crowd, and were followed by the whole company of bakers, marching on foot, two by two, in their best clothes, with cakes, loaves, pasties, and pies of all sorts, on their heads, and after them two buffoons, or jack-puddings, with their faces and clothes smeared with meal, who diverted the mob with their antic gestures. In the same manner followed all the companies of trade in the empire; the nobler sort, such as jewellers, mercers, &c., finely mounted, and many of the pageants that represent their trades, perfectly magnificent; among which, that of the furriers made one of the best figures, being a very large machine, set round with the skins of ermines, foxes,

&c., so well stuffed, that the animals seemed to be alive, and followed by music and dancers. I believe they were, upon the whole, twenty thousand men, all ready to follow his highness if he commanded them. The rear was closed by the volunteers, who came to beg the honour of dying in his service. This part of the show seemed to me so barbarous, that I removed from the window upon the first appearance of it. They were all naked to the middle. Some had their arms pierced through with arrows, left sticking in them. Others had them sticking in their heads, the blood trickling down their faces. Some slashed their arms with sharp knives, making the blood spring out upon those that stood there; and this is looked upon as an expression of their zeal for glory. I am told that some make use of it to advance their love; and, when they are near the window where their mistress stands (all the women in town being veiled to see this spectacle), they stick another arrow for her sake, who gives some sign of approbation and encouragement to this gallantry. The whole show lasted for near eight hours, to my great sorrow, who was heartily tired, though I was in the house of the widow of the captain-pashá (admiral), who refreshed me with coffee, sweetmeats, sherbet, &c., with all possible civility.—*Letters during the Embassy to Constantinople.*

### 3. A German Court.

Blankenburg, Oct. 1716.

I RECEIVED yours, dear sister, the very day I left Hanover. You may easily imagine I was then in too great a hurry to answer it; but you see I take the first opportunity of doing myself that pleasure.

I came here the fifteenth, very late at night, after a terrible journey, in the worst roads and weather that ever poor



traveller suffered. I have taken this little fatigue merely to oblige the reigning empress, and carry a message from her imperial majesty to the duchess of Blankenburg, her mother, who is a princess of great address and good-breeding, and may be still called a fine woman. It was so late when I came to this town, I did not think it proper to disturb the duke and duchess with the news of my arrival ; so I took up my quarters in a miserable inn : but as soon as I had sent my compliments to their highnesses, they immediately sent me their own coach and six horses, which had however enough to do to draw us up the very high hill on which the castle is situated. The duchess is extremely obliging to me, and this little court is not without its diversions. The duke taillys at basset every night ; and the duchess tells me, she is so well pleased with my company, that it makes her play less than she used to do. I should find it very difficult to steal time to write, if she was not now at church, where I cannot wait on her, not understanding the language enough to pay my devotions in it.

You will not forgive me, if I do not say something of Hanover ; I cannot tell you that the town is either large or magnificent. The opera-house, which was built by the late elector, is much finer than that of Vienna. I was very sorry that the ill weather did not permit me to see *Herrhausen* in all its beauty ; but, in spite of the snow, I thought the gardens very fine. I was particularly surprised at the vast number of orange trees, much larger than any I have ever seen in England, though this climate is certainly colder. But I had more reason to wonder that night at the king's table, to see a present from a gentleman of this country, of two large baskets full of ripe oranges and lemons of different sorts, many of which were quite new to me ; and, what I thought worth all the rest, two ripe ananas, which,

to my taste, are a fruit perfectly delicious. You know they are naturally the growth of Brazil. and I could not imagine how they came here, but by enchantment. Upon enquiry, I learnt that they have brought their stoves to such perfection, they lengthen their summer as long as they please, giving to every plant the degree of heat it would receive from the sun in its native soil. The effect is very nearly the same; I am surprised we do not practise in England so useful an invention.

This reflection leads me to consider our obstinacy in shaking with cold five months in the year, rather than make use of stoves, which are certainly one of the greatest conveniences of life. Besides, they are so far from spoiling the form of a room, that they add very much to the magnificence of it, when they are painted and gilt, as they are at Vienna, or at Dresden, where they are often in the shapes of china jars, statues, or fine cabinets, so naturally represented, that they are not to be distinguished. If ever I return, in defiance to the fashion, you shall certainly see one in the chamber of your sister. I will write often, since you desire it: but I must beg you to be a little more particular in yours; you fancy me at forty miles distance, and forget, that, after so long an absence, I cannot understand hints.—*Letters during the Embassy to Constantinople.*

#### 4. Advice on the Education of a Grandchild.

It is the common error of builders and parents to follow some plan they think beautiful (and perhaps is so), without considering that nothing is beautiful which is displaced. Hence we see so many edifices raised that the raisers can never inhabit, being too large for their fortunes.

Vistas are laid open over barren heaths, and apartments contrived for a coolness very agreeable in Italy, but killing in the north of Britain: thus every woman endeavours to breed her daughter a fine lady, qualifying her for a station in which she will never appear, and at the same time incapacitating her for that retirement, to which she is destined. Learning, if she has a real taste for it, will not only make her contented, but happy in it. No entertainment is so cheap as reading, nor any pleasure so lasting. She will not want new fashions, nor regret the loss of expensive diversions, or variety of company, if she can be amused with an author, in her closet. To render this amusement complete, she should be permitted to learn the languages. I have heard it lamented that boys lose so many years in mere learning of words: this is no objection to a girl, whose time is not so precious: she cannot advance herself in any profession, and has therefore more hours to spare; and as you say her memory is good, she will be very agreeably employed this way. There are two cautions to be given on this subject: first, not to think herself learned, when she can read Latin, or even Greek. Languages are more properly to be called vehicles of learning than learning itself, as may be observed in many schoolmasters, who, though perhaps critics in grammar, are the most ignorant fellows upon earth. True knowledge consists in knowing things, not words. I would no farther wish her a linguist than to enable her to read books in their originals, that are often corrupted, and are always injured by translations. Two hours application every morning will bring this about much sooner than you can imagine, and she will have leisure enough beside, to run over the English poetry, which is a more important part of a woman's education than it is generally supposed. Many a young damsel has been ruined

by a fine copy of verses, which she would have laughed at if she had known it had been stolen from Mr. Waller. . . . You should encourage your daughter to talk over with you what she reads; and as you are very capable of distinguishing, take care she does not mistake pert folly for wit and humour, or rhyme for poetry, which are the common errors of young people, and have a train of ill consequences. . .

It is a saying of Thucydides, that ignorance is bold, and knowledge reserved. Indeed it is impossible to be far advanced in it, without being more humbled by a conviction of human ignorance, than elated by learning. At the same time I recommend books, I neither exclude work nor drawing. I think it as scandalous for a woman not to know how to use a needle, as for a man not to know how to use a sword. I was once extremely fond of my pencil, and it was a great mortification to me when my father turned off my master, having made a considerable progress for the short time I learnt. My over eagerness in the pursuit of it had brought a weakness in my eyes, that made it necessary to leave off; and all the advantage I got was the improvement of my hand. I see, by hers, that practice will make her a ready writer: she may attain it by serving you for a secretary, when your health or affairs make it troublesome to you to write yourself; and custom will make it an agreeable amusement to her. She cannot have too many for that station of life which will probably be her' fate. The ultimate end of your education was to make you a good wife (and I have the comfort to hear that you are one): hers ought to be, to make her happy in a virgin state. I will not say it is happier; but it is undoubtedly safer than any marriage. In a lottery, where there is (at the lowest computation) ten thousand blanks to a prize, it is the most prudent choice, not to venture. I have always been so

thoroughly persuaded of this truth, that, notwithstanding the flattering views I had for you (as I never intended you a sacrifice to my vanity), I thought I owed you the justice to lay before you all the hazards attending matrimony: you may recollect I did so in the strongest manner. Perhaps you may have more success in the instructing your daughter: she has so much company at home, she will not need seeking it abroad, and will more readily take the notions, you think fit to give her. As you were alone in my family, it would have been thought a great cruelty to suffer you no companions of your own age, especially having so many near relations, and I do not wonder their opinions influenced yours. I was not sorry to see you not determined on a single life, knowing it was not your father's intention, and contented myself with endeavouring to make your home so easy that you might not be in haste to leave it.—*Letters to the Countess of Bute.*

### XXXIII.

#### PHILIP DORMER STANHOPE, EARL OF CHESTERFIELD.

1694—1773.

PHILIP DORMER STANHOPE, one of the most shining characters of his age, was born in 1694. He lost his mother early, and being neglected by his father, was brought up chiefly under the care of his grandmother. He was sent when eighteen years of age to Cambridge, and appears even there to have devoted much attention to the formation of style, of which he afterwards became so great a master. On leaving the university he made the customary tour of Europe. The converse of foreign courts stimulated his taste for the courtesies of polite life and for the attainment of that knowledge of the world which he pursued so stedfastly through later years. The extensive possession of this knowledge became his chief characteristic in after life, and its display is the most noticeable feature of his writings. He entered Parliament as member for St. Germain's before he was of age, but took little part in public affairs till after the death of his father in 1726, when he became a member of the Upper House. His first public employment was an embassy to Holland, in 1728, in which he displayed great skill, diplomacy being peculiarly suited to his tastes and talents from his conciliatory temper and manners, his quick insight into character, and his knowledge of foreign languages and history. A second embassy to the same country confirmed his reputation as a statesman. In 1745, at the moment of the Rebellion in Scotland, Chesterfield became Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, and entered on the most brilliant

and useful part of his career. By impartial justice, by firmness, moderation and clemency, he kept that country tranquil, and his administration deserves the praise due to a humane, liberal, and far-sighted policy.

At the close of 1746 he became Secretary of State, and in 1748 he finally withdrew from official life. In 1751, Chesterfield, with the aid of Lord Macclesfield and of the astronomer Bradley, carried out, in spite of popular prejudice, the Reformation of the Calendar. After this, and till his death, an increasing deafness excluded Lord Chesterfield from taking part in public life. He died in 1773, 'satiated,' as he himself said, 'with the pompous follies of this life.'

Lord Chesterfield left a number of miscellaneous pieces which have been collected from the periodicals in which for the most part they appeared. One such paper from the *World* is given below, both because of the interest which attaches to the appearance of the great English Dictionary, and also because of the reply, a model of dignified resentment which it provoked from Dr. Johnson, and which will be found among the passages selected from his writings. Johnson had seven years before addressed the plan of the Dictionary to Lord Chesterfield, who had left him unnoticed until the work was on the eve of publication, and its success assured.

As an author, however, says Lord Mahon, Chesterfield's character must stand or fall by the celebrated *Letters* addressed to his natural son Philip Stanhope. Viewed as compositions, these letters appear almost unrivalled as models for a serious epistolary style; clear, elegant, and terse, never straining at effect, and yet never hurried into carelessness. They have incurred just reprehension on two grounds - that they insist too much on manners and graces instead of on more solid acquirements, and that some of their maxims are repugnant to good morals; even when right in themselves, the maxims laid down seldom rest on higher motives than expediency, reputation, or personal advantage.

## 1. The State of France in 1758.

WHEREVER you are, inform yourself minutely of, and attend particularly to, the affairs of France; they grow serious, and, in my opinion, will grow more and more so every day. The King is despised, and I do not wonder at it; but he has brought it about to be hated at the same time, which seldom happens to the same man. His Ministers are known to be as disunited as incapable: he hesitates between the Church and the Parliaments, like the ass in the fable, that starved between two hampers of hay; too much in love with his mistress to part with her, and too much afraid for his soul, to enjoy her: jealous of the Parliaments, who would support his authority; and a devoted bigot to the Church that would destroy it. The people are poor, consequently discontented: those who have religion are divided in their notions of it; which is saying that they hate one another. The clergy never do forgive; much less will they forgive the Parliament: the Parliament never will forgive them. The army must, without doubt, take, in their own minds at least, different parts in all these disputes, which, upon occasion, would break out. Armies, though always the supporters and tools of absolute power for the time being, are always the destroyers of it too; by frequently changing the hands in which they think proper to lodge it. This was the case of the Praetorian bands, who deposed and murdered the monsters they had raised to oppress mankind. The Janissaries in Turkey, and the regiments of Guards in Russia, do the same now. The French nation reasons freely, which they never did before, upon matters of religion and government, and begin to be *sprejudicati*; the officers do so too; in short, all the symptoms which I have ever met with in history, previous to great changes and



revolutions in Government, now exist, and daily increase in France. I am glad of it; the rest of Europe will be the quieter, and have time to recover. England, I am sure, wants rest; for it wants men and money: the Republic of the United Provinces wants both still more: the other Powers cannot well dance, whence neither France nor the Maritime Powers can, as they used to do, pay the piper. The first squabble in Europe that I foresee will be about the Crown of Poland, should the present King die; and therefore I wish his Majesty a long life and a merry Christmas.—*Letters to his Son.*

## 2. Casuistry and Common Sense.

PRAY let no quibbles of lawyers, no refinements of casuists, break into the plain notions of right and wrong, which every man's right reason, and plain common sense, suggest to him. To do as you would be done by, is the plain, sure, and undisputed rule of morality and justice. Stick to that; and be convinced, that whatever breaks into it, in any degree, however speciously it may be turned, and however puzzling it may be to answer it, is, notwithstanding, false in itself, unjust, and criminal. I do not know a crime in the world which is not, by the casuists among the Jesuits (especially the twenty-four collected, I think, by Escobar) allowed in some, or many, cases not to be criminal. The principles first laid down by them are often specious, the reasonings plausible, but the conclusion always a lie: for it is contrary to that evident and undeniable rule of justice which I have mentioned above, of not doing to any one what you would not have him do to you. But, however, these refined pieces of casuistry and sophistry being very convenient and welcome to people's passions and appetites, they gladly accept the indulgence, without desiring to detect

the fallacy of the reasoning : and, indeed, many, I might say most, people are not able to do it, which makes the publication of such quibblings and refinements the more pernicious. I am no skilful casuist, nor subtle disputant ; and yet I would undertake to justify and qualify the profession of a highwayman, step by step, and so plausibly as to make many ignorant people embrace the profession, as an innocent, if not even a laudable one ; and to puzzle people of some degree of knowledge to answer me point by point. I have seen a book, entitled *Quidlibet ex Quolibet*, or, the art of making anything out of anything ; which is not so difficult as it would seem, if once one quits certain plain truths, obvious in gross to every understanding, in order to run after the ingenious refinements of warm imaginations and speculative reasonings. Doctor Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne, a very worthy, ingenious, and learned man, has written a book to prove that there is no such thing as matter, and that nothing exists but in idea : that you and I only fancy ourselves eating, drinking, and sleeping ; you at Leipsig, and I at London : that we think we have flesh and blood, legs, arms, &c., but that we are only spirit. His arguments are, strictly speaking, unanswerable ; but yet I am so far from being convinced by them, that I am determined to go on to eat and drink, and walk and ride, in order to keep that *matter*, which I so mistakenly imagine my body at present to consist of, in as good plight as possible. Common sense (which, in truth, is very uncommon) is the best sense I know of ; abide by it ; it will counsel you best. Read and hear, for your amusement, ingenious systems, nice questions subtly agitated, with all the refinements that warm imaginations suggest ; but consider them only as exercitations for the mind, and return always to settle with common sense.

### 3. Good Manners and Good Company.

THERE should be in the least, as well as in the greatest parts of a gentleman, *les manières nobles*. Sense will teach you some, observation others: attend carefully to the manners, the diction, the motions, of people of the first fashion, and form your own upon them. On the other hand, observe a little those of the vulgar, in order to avoid them; for though the things which they say or do may be the same, the manner is always totally different; and in that, and nothing else, consists the characteristic of a man of fashion. The lowest peasant speaks, moves, dresses, eats, and drinks as much as a man of the first fashion, but does them all quite differently; so that by doing and saying most things in a manner opposite to that of the vulgar, you have a great chance of doing and saying them right. There are gradations in awkwardness and vulgarism, as there are in everything else. *Les manières de Robe*, though not quite right, are still better than *les manières Bourgeoises*; and these, though bad, are still better than *les manières de Campagne*. But the language, the air, the dress, and the manners of the Court, are the only true standard *des manières nobles, et d'un honnête homme*. *Ex pede Herculem* is an old and true saying, and very applicable to our present subject; for a man of parts, who has been bred at Courts, and used to keep the best company, will distinguish himself, and is to be known from the vulgar, by every word, attitude, gesture, and even look. I cannot leave these seeming *minuties*, without repeating to you the necessity of your carving well, which is an article, little as it is, that is useful twice every day of one's life; and the doing it ill is very troublesome to one's self, and very disagreeable, often ridiculous, to others.

Good company is not what respective sets of company are

pleased either to call or think themselves ; but it is that company which all the people of the place call, and acknowledge to be, good company, notwithstanding some objections which they may form to some of the individuals who compose it. It consists chiefly (but by no means without exception) of people of considerable birth, rank, and character : for people of neither birth nor rank, are frequently, and very justly, admitted into it, if distinguished by any peculiar merit, or eminency in any liberal art or science. Nay, so motley a thing is good company, that many people, without birth, rank, or merit, intrude into it by their own forwardness, and others slide into it by the protection of some considerable person ; and some even of indifferent characters and morals make part of it. But, in the main, the good part preponderates, and people of infamous and blasted characters are never admitted. In this fashionable good company, the best manners, and the best language, of the place are most unquestionably to be learnt ; for they establish, and give the tone to both, which are therefore called the language and manners of good company : there being no legal tribunal to ascertain either.

A company consisting wholly of people of the first quality, cannot, for that reason, be called good company, in the common acceptation of the phrase, unless they are, into the bargain, the fashionable and accredited company of the place ; for people of the very first quality can be as silly, as ill-bred, and as worthless, as people of the meanest degree. On the other hand, a company consisting entirely of people of very low condition, whatever their merit or parts may be, can never be called good company ; and consequently should not be much frequented, though by no means despised.

A company wholly composed of men of learning, though greatly to be valued and respected, is not meant by the words

*good company* : they cannot have the easy manners and *tour-nure* of the world, as they do not live in it. If you can bear your part well in such a company, it is extremely right to be in it sometimes, and you will be but more esteemed, in other companies, for having a place in that. But then do not let it engross you ; for if you do, you will be only considered as one of the *litterati* by profession ; which is not the way either to shine, or rise in the world.

The company of professed wits and poets is extremely inviting to most young men ; who, if they have wit themselves, are pleased with it, and if they have none, are sillily proud of being one of it : but it should be frequented with moderation and judgment, and you should by no means give yourself up to it. A wit is a very unpopular denomination, as it carries terror along with it ; and people in general are as much afraid of a live wit, in company, as a woman is of a gun, which she thinks may go off of itself, and do her a mischief. Their acquaintance is, however, worth seeking, and their company worth frequenting ; but not exclusively of others, nor to such a degree as to be considered only as one of that particular set.

But the company, which of all others, you should most carefully avoid, is, that low company, which, in every sense of the word, is low indeed ; low in rank, low in parts, low in manners, and low in merit. You will, perhaps, be surprised, that I should think it necessary to warn you against such company ; but yet I do not think it wholly unnecessary, after the many instances which I have seen, of men of sense and rank, discredited, vilified, and undone, by keeping such company. Vanity, that source of many of our follies, and of some of our crimes, has sunk many a man into company, in every light infinitely below himself, for the sake of being the first man in it. There he dictates, is applauded, admired ; and,

for the sake of being the *Coryphæus* of that wretched chorus, disgraces, and disqualifies himself soon for any better company. Depend upon it, you will sink or rise to the level of the company which you commonly keep: people will judge of you, and not unreasonably, by that. There is good sense in the Spanish saying, 'Tell me who you live with, and I will tell you who you are.' Make it therefore your business, wherever you are, to get into that company, which everybody of the place allows to be the best company. next to their own: which is the best definition that I can give you, of good company.—*Letters to his Son.*

#### 4. Affectation.

MOST people complain of fortune, few of nature; and the kinder they think the latter has been to them, the more they murmur at what they call the injustice of the former.

Why have not I the riches, the rank, the power, of such and such, is the common expostulation with fortune: but why have not I the merit, the talents, the wit, or the beauty of such and such others, is a reproach rarely or never made to nature.

The truth is, that nature, seldom profuse, and seldom niggardly, has distributed her gifts more equally than she is generally supposed to have done. Education and situation make the great difference. Culture improves, and occasions elicit, natural talents. I make no doubt but that there are potentially, if I may use that pedantic word, many Bacons, Lockes, Newtons, Cæsars, Cromwells, and Marlboroughs, at the plough-tail, behind counters, and, perhaps, even among the nobility; but the soil must be cultivated, and the seasons favourable, for the fruit to have all its spirit and flavour.

If sometimes our common parent has been a little partial, and not kept the scales quite even; if one preponderates too

much, we throw into the lighter a due counterpoise of vanity, which never fails to set all right. Hence it happens, that hardly any one man would, without reserve, and in every particular, change with any other.

Though all are thus satisfied with the dispensations of nature, how few listen to her voice ! how few follow her as a guide ! In vain she points out to us the plain and direct way to truth ; vanity, fancy, affectation, and fashion, assume her shape, and wind us through fairy-ground to folly and error.

These deviations from nature are often attended by serious consequences, and always by ridiculous ones ; for there is nothing truer than the trite observation, ‘that people are never ridiculous for being what they really are, but for affecting what they really are not.’ Affectation is the only source, and, at the same time, the only justifiable object, of ridicule. No man whatsoever, be his pretensions what they will, has a natural right to be ridiculous ; it is an acquired right, and not to be acquired without some industry ; which perhaps is the reason why so many people are so jealous and tenacious of it. Even some people’s vices are not their own, but affected and adopted, though at the same time unenjoyed, in hopes of shining in those fashionable societies, where the reputation of certain vices gives lustre. In these cases, the execution is commonly as awkward as the design is absurd ; and the ridicule equals the guilt.

This calls to my mind a thing that really happened not many years ago. A young fellow of some rank and fortune, just let loose from the university, resolved, in order to make a figure in the world, to assume the shining character of what he called a rake. By way of learning the rudiments of his intended profession, he frequented the theatres, where he was often drunk, and always noisy. Being one night at

the representation of that most absurd play, the *Libertine destroyed*, he was so charmed with the profligacy of the hero of the piece, that, to the edification of the audience, he swore many oaths that he would be the libertine *destroyed*. A discreet friend of his who sat by him, kindly represented to him, that to be the *libertine* was a laudable design, which he greatly approved of; but that to be the libertine *destroyed*, seemed to him an unnecessary part of his plan, and rather rash. He persisted, however, in his first resolution, and insisted upon being the libertine, and *destroyed*. Probably he was so; at least the presumption is in his favour. There are, I am persuaded, so many cases of this nature, that for my own part I would desire no greater step towards the reformation of manners for the next twenty years, than that our people should have no vices but *their own*.

The blockhead who affects wisdom, because nature has given him dulness, becomes ridiculous only by his adopted character; whereas he might have stagnated unobserved in his native mud, or perhaps have engrossed deeds, collected shells, and studied heraldry, or logic, with some success.

The shining coxcomb aims at all, and decides finally upon every thing, because nature has given him pertness. The degree of parts and animal spirits necessary to constitute that character, if properly applied, might have made him useful in many parts of life; but his affectation and presumption make him useless in most, and ridiculous in all. . . .

Self-love, kept within due bounds, is a natural and useful sentiment. It is, in truth, social love too, as Mr. Pope has very justly observed: it is the spring of many good actions, and of no ridiculous ones. But self-flattery is only the ape or caricature of self-love, and resembles it no more than to heighten the ridicule. Like other flattery, it is the most pro-



husely bestowed and greedily swallowed where it is the least deserved. I will conclude this subject with the substance of a fable of the ingenious monsieur De La Motte, which seems not unapplicable to it.

Jupiter made a lottery in heaven, in which mortals, as well as gods, were allowed to have tickets. The prize was WISDOM; and Minerva got it. The mortals murmured, and accused the gods of foul play. Jupiter, to wipe off this aspersion, declared another lottery, for mortals singly and exclusively of the gods. The prize was FOLLY. They got it, and shared it among themselves. All were satisfied. The loss of wisdom was neither regretted nor remembered; FOLLY supplied its place, and those who had the largest share of it, thought themselves the wisest. — *Miscellaneous Pieces.*

#### 5. Johnson's Dictionary.

I HEARD the other day, with great pleasure, that Mr. Johnson's English dictionary, with a grammar and history of our language prefixed, will be published this winter, in two large volumes in folio.

I had long lamented, that we had no lawful standard of our language set up for those to repair to who might choose to speak and write it grammatically and correctly: and I have as long wished that either some one person of distinguished abilities would undertake the work singly, or that a certain number of gentlemen would form themselves, or be formed by the government, into a society for that purpose. The late ingenious doctor Swift proposed a plan of this nature to his friend, as he thought him, the lord treasurer Oxford, but without success; precision and perspicuity not being in general the favourite objects of ministers, and perhaps still less so of that minister than any other.

Many people have imagined that so extensive a work

would have been best formed by numbers of persons, who should have taken their several departments of examining, sifting, winnowing (I borrow this image from the Italian *Crusca*), purifying, and finally fixing our language, by incorporating their respective funds into one joint stock. But, whether this opinion be true or false, I think the public in general, and the republic of letters in particular, greatly obliged to Mr. Johnson for having undertaken and executed so great and desirable a work. Perfection is not to be expected from man; but, if we are to judge by the various works of Mr. Johnson already published, we have good reason to believe that he will bring this as near to perfection as any one man could do. The plan of it, which he published some years ago, seems to me to be a proof of it. Nothing can be more rationally imagined, or more accurately and elegantly expressed. I therefore recommend the previous perusal of it to all those who intend to buy the dictionary, and who, I suppose, are all those who can afford it.

The celebrated dictionaries of the Florentine and French academies owe their present size and perfection to very small beginnings. Some private gentlemen at Florence, and some at Paris, had met at each other's houses to talk over and consider their respective languages: upon which they published some short essays, which essays were the embryos of those productions that now do so much honour to the two nations. Even Spain, which seems not to be the soil where, of late at least, letters have either prospered or been cultivated, has produced a dictionary, and a good one too, of the Spanish language, in six large volumes in folio.

I cannot help thinking it a sort of disgrace to our nation, that hitherto we have had no such standard of our language; our dictionaries at present being more properly what

our neighbours the Dutch and the Germans call theirs, word-books, than dictionaries in the superior sense of that title. All words, good and bad, are there jumbled indiscriminately together, insomuch that the injudicious reader may speak, and write, as inelegantly, improperly, and vulgarly, as he pleases, by and with the authority of one or other of our word-books.

It must be owned that our language is at present in a state of anarchy ; and hitherto, perhaps, it may not have been the worse for it. During our free and open trade, many words and expressions have been imported, adopted, and naturalized from other languages, which have greatly enriched our own. Let it still preserve what real strength and beauty it may have borrowed from others ; but let it not, like the Tarpeian maid, be overwhelmed and crushed by unnecessary foreign ornaments. The time for discrimination seems to be now come. Toleration, adoption, and naturalization, have run their lengths. Good order and authority are now necessary. But where shall we find them, and at the same time the obedience due to them ? We must have recourse to the old Roman expedient in times of confusion, and choose a dictator. Upon this principle I give my vote for Mr. Johnson to fill that great and arduous post. And I hereby declare, that I make a total surrender of all my rights and privileges in the English language, as a free-born British subject, to the said Mr. Johnson during the term of his dictatorship. Nay more ; I will not only obey him, like an old Roman, as my dictator, but, like a modern Roman, I will implicitly believe in him as my pope, and hold him to be infallible while in the chair ; but no longer. More than this he cannot well require ; for I presume that obedience can never be expected when there is neither terror to enforce, nor interest to invite it.

I confess that I have so much honest English pride, or perhaps prejudice, about me, as to think myself more considerable for whatever contributes to the honour, the advantage, or the ornament of my native country. I have therefore a sensible pleasure in reflecting upon the rapid progress which our language has lately made, and still continues to make, all over Europe. It is frequently spoken, and almost universally understood, in Holland; it is kindly entertained as a relation in the most civilized parts of Germany; and it is studied as a learned language, though yet little spoke, by all those in France and Italy who either have, or pretend to have, any learning.

The spreading the French language over most parts of Europe, to the degree of making it almost an universal one, was always reckoned among the glories of the reign of Lewis the Fourteenth. But be it remembered, that the success of his arms first opened the way to it; though at the same time it must be owned that a great number of most excellent authors, who flourished in his time, added strength and velocity to its progress. Whereas our language has made its way singly by its own weight and merit, under the conduct of those leaders, Shakespear, Bacon, Milton, Locke, Newton, Swift, Pope, Addison, &c. A nobler sort of conquest, and a far more glorious triumph, since graced by none but willing captives!

These authors, though for the most part but indifferently translated into foreign languages, gave other nations a sample of the British genius. The copies, imperfect as they were, pleased and excited a general desire of seeing the originals; and both our authors and our language soon became classical.

But a grammar, a dictionary, and a history of our language, through its several stages, were still wanting at home, and

importunately called for from abroad. Mr. Johnson's labours will now, and, I dare say, very fully, supply that want, and greatly contribute to the farther spreading of our language in other countries. Learners were discouraged by finding no standard to resort to, and consequently thought it incapable of any. They will be undeceived and encouraged.

There are many hints and considerations relative to our language, which I should have taken the liberty of suggesting to Mr. Johnson, had I not been convinced that they have equally occurred to him: but there is one, and a very material one it is, to which perhaps he may not have given all the necessary attention. I mean the genteeler part of our language, which owes both its rise and progress to my fair countrywomen, whose natural turn is more to the copiousness than to the correction of diction. I would not advise him to be rash enough to proscribe any of those happy redundancies and luxuriances of expression, with which they have enriched our language. They willingly inflict fetters, but very unwillingly submit to wear them. In this case the talk will be so difficult, that I design, as a common friend, to propose in some future paper, the means which appear to me the most likely to reconcile matters.

*P.S.* I hope that none of my courteous readers will upon this occasion be so uncourteous, as to suspect me of being a hired and interested puff of this work; for I most solemnly protest, that neither Mr. Johnson, nor any person employed by him, nor any bookseller or booksellers concerned in the success of it, have ever offered me the usual compliment of a pair of gloves or a bottle of wine: nor has even Mr. Dodsley, though my publisher, and, as I am informed, deeply interested in the sale of this dictionary, so much as invited me to take a bit of mutton with him.—*Miscellaneous Pieces.*

## XXXIV.

### HENRY FIELDING.

1707-1754.

HENRY FIELDING was born in 1707, at Sharpham Park in Somersetshire. His father, General Edmund Fielding, who belonged to a younger branch of the Denbigh family, had served under Marlborough, and was a person of good position in society, but seems to have set his son the bad example of extravagance. Henry Fielding was educated at Eton, where he is said to have acquired a great familiarity with the Latin and Greek classics. He afterwards studied jurisprudence at Leyden, but was compelled to return to England in consequence of his father's inability to support him at that University. Finding himself at the age of twenty thrown upon his own resources, 'with an allowance from his father,' as he said himself, which 'any one might pay who could, and with no choice but to be a hackney writer or a hackney coachman,' he preferred the former alternative, and became a dramatic author. None of his farces or comedies obtained, or indeed deserved, any considerable success; they can hardly be said to contain any promise of his future excellence. At the age of twenty-eight he married, and, inheriting at the same time a small estate, retired to the country. Here however in two years he had completely ruined himself by a ludicrous extravagance, and returned to London to study law. To maintain himself and his family he again wrote plays, and was besides concerned in more than one of the periodicals of the day. At thirty-five the desire of ridiculing Richardson's *Pamela* suggested to him the composition of *Joseph Andrews*, and having once found the true bent of his genius, he followed it up with ardour, and,

while still occupied with periodical writing and with the duties of a stipendiary magistracy, he found time for the production of his later and equally celebrated novels. But his health, which had long been declining, at last gave way altogether, and in 1754, as a last chance for life, he sailed for Lisbon; but only to die there in the autumn of the same year.

Fielding's English is pure, simple, and unaffected. But his high place in English literature is due not so much to his style, though original and excellent in its kind, as to his transcendent genius as a novelist; to his wide human sympathies, his just conception and sharp delineation of character, his humour, so copious as to extend with undiminished force over his voluminous writings, and the buoyant sense of the enjoyment of life which he has infused into pages composed not unfrequently under the pressure of much physical suffering.

### 1. The Rescue of a Kitten.

THIS gale continued till towards noon; when the east end of the island bore but little a-head of us. The captain swaggered, and declared he would keep the sea; but the wind got the better of him, so that about three he gave up the victory, and, making a sudden tack, stood in for the shore, passed by Spithead and Portsmouth, and came to an anchor at a place called Ryde on the island.

A most tragical incident fell out this day at sea. While the ship was under sail, but making, as will appear, no great way, a kitten, one of the four of the feline inhabitants of the cabin, fell from the window into the water; an alarm was immediately given to the captain, who was then upon deck, and received it with the utmost concern and many bitter oaths. He immediately gave orders to the steersman in favour of the poor thing, as he called it; the sails were instantly slackened, and all hands, as the phrase is, employed

to recover the poor animal. I was, I own, extremely surprised at all this; less, indeed, at the captain's extreme tenderness, than at his conceiving any possibility of success; for, if puss had had nine thousand, instead of nine lives, I concluded they had been all lost. The boatswain, however, had more sanguine hopes; for, having stript himself of his jacket, breeches, and shirt, he leaped boldly into the water, and to my great astonishment, in a few minutes, returned to the ship, bearing the motionless animal in his mouth. Nor was this, I observed, a matter of such great difficulty as it appeared to my ignorance, and possibly may seem to that of my fresh water reader: the kitten was now exposed to air and sun on the deck, where its life, of which it retained no symptoms, was despaired of by all.

The captain's humanity, if I may so call it, did not so totally destroy his philosophy, as to make him yield himself up to affliction on this melancholy occasion. Having felt his loss like a man, he resolved to shew he could bear it like one; and having declared he had rather have lost a cask of rum or brandy, betook himself to threshing at backgammon with the Portuguese friar, in which innocent amusement they had passed about two-thirds of their time.

But, as I have, perhaps, a little too wantonly endeavoured to raise the tender passions of my readers in this narrative, I should think myself unpardonable if I concluded it, without giving them the satisfaction of hearing that the kitten at last recovered, to the great joy of the good captain, but to the great disappointment of some of the sailors, who asserted that the drowning a cat was the very surest way of raising a favourable wind; a supposition of which, though we have heard several plausible accounts, we will not presume to assign the true original reason.—*A Voyage to Lisbon.*



## 2. The Sea Captain.

BUT, to return from so long a digression, to which the use of so improper an epithet gave occasion, and to which the novelty of the subject allured, I will make the reader amends by concisely telling him, that the captain poured forth such a torrent of abuse that I very hastily, and very foolishly, resolved to quit the ship. I gave immediate orders to summon a hoy to carry me that evening to Dartmouth, without considering any consequence. Those orders I gave in no very low voice; so that those above stairs might possibly conceive there was more than one master in the cabin. In the same tone I likewise threatened the captain with that which, he afterwards said, he feared more than any rock or quicksand. Nor can we wonder at this when we are told he had been twice obliged to bring to and cast anchor there before, and had neither time escaped without the loss of almost his whole cargo.

The most distant sound of law thus frightened a man who had often, I am convinced, heard numbers of cannon roar round him with intrepidity. Nor did he sooner see the hoy approaching the vessel than he ran down again into the cabin, and, his rage being perfectly subsided, he tumbled on his knees, and a little too abjectly implored for mercy.

I did not suffer a brave man and an old man to remain a moment in this posture; but I immediately forgave him.

And here, that I may not be thought the sly trumpeter of my own praises, I do utterly disclaim all praise on the occasion. Neither did the greatness of my mind dictate, nor the force of my Christianity exact this forgiveness. To speak truth, I forgave him from a motive which would make men much more forgiving if they were much wiser than they are; because it was convenient for me so to do.

Wednesday. This morning the captain dressed himself in scarlet, in order to pay a visit to a Devonshire squire, to whom a captain of a ship is a guest of no ordinary consequence, as he is a stranger and a gentleman, who hath seen a great deal of the world in foreign parts, and knows all the news of the times.

The squire, therefore, was to send his boat for the captain; but a most unfortunate accident happened; for, as the wind was extremely rough, and against the hoy, while this was endeavouring to avail itself of great seamanship, in hawling up against the wind, a sudden squall carried off sail and yard; or, at least, so disabled them, that they were no longer of any use, and unable to reach the ship; but the captain, from the deck, saw his hopes of venison disappointed, and was forced either to stay on board his ship, or to hoist forth his own long-boat, which he could not prevail with himself to think of, though the smell of the venison had had twenty times its attraction. He did, indeed, love his ship as his wife, and his boats as children, and never willingly trusted the latter, poor things! to the dangers of the seas.

To say truth, notwithstanding the strict rigour with which he preserved the dignity of his station, and the hasty impatience with which he resented any affront to his person or orders, disobedience to which he could in no instance brook in any person on board, he was one of the best-natured fellows alive. He acted the part of a father to his sailors; he expressed great tenderness for any of them when ill, and never suffered any the least work of supererogation to go unrewarded by a glass of gin. He even extended his humanity, if I may so call it, to animals, and even his cats and kittens had large shares in his affections. An instance of which we saw this evening, when the cat, which had shewn it could not be drowned, was found suffocated under a feather-bed in the

cabin. I will not endeavour to describe his lamentations with more prolixity than barely by saying, they were grievous, and seemed to have some mixture of the Irish howl in them. Nay, he carried his fondness even to inanimate objects, of which we have above set down a pregnant example in his demonstration of love and tenderness towards his boats and ship. He spoke of a ship which he had commanded formerly, and which was long since no more, which he had called the Princess of Brazil, as a widower of a deceased wife. This ship, after having followed the honest business of carrying goods and passengers for hire many years, did at last take to evil courses and turn privateer, in which service, to use his own words, she received many dreadful wounds, which he himself had felt, as if they had been his own.—  
*A Voyage to Lisbon.*

### 3. Good Breeding in the first half of the Eighteenth Century.

Now, in order to descend minutely into any rules for good-breeding, it will be necessary to lay some scene, or to throw our disciple into some particular circumstance. We will begin then with a visit in the country; and as the principal actor on this occasion is the person who receives it, we will, as briefly as possible, lay down some general rules for his conduct; marking, at the same time, the principal deviations we have observed on these occasions.

When an expected guest arrives to dinner at your house, if your equal, or indeed, not greatly your inferior, he should be sure to find your family in some order, and yourself dressed and ready to receive him at your gate with a smiling countenance. This infuses an immediate cheerfulness into your guest, and persuades him of your esteem and desire of

his company. Not so is the behaviour of Polyspherchon, at whose gate you are obliged to knock a considerable time<sup>4</sup> before you gain admittance. At length, the door being opened to you by a maid or some improper servant, who wonders where the devil all the men are ; and being asked if the gentleman is at home, answers, she believes so ; you are conducted into a hall, or back-parlour, where you stay some time, before the gentleman, in a dishabille from his study or his garden, waits upon you, asks pardon, and assures you he did not expect you so soon.

Your guest being introduced into a drawing-room, is, after the first ceremonies, to be asked, whether he will refresh himself after his journey, before dinner (for which he is never to stay longer than the usual or fixed hour). But this request is never to be repeated oftener than twice, and not in imitation of Calepus, who, as if hired by a physician, crams wine in a morning down the throats of his most temperate friends, their constitutions being not so dear to them as their present quiet.

When dinner is on the table, and the ladies have taken their places, the gentlemen are to be introduced into the eating-room, where they are to be seated with as much seeming indifference as possible, unless there be any present whose degrees claim an undoubted precedence. As to the rest, the general rules of precedence are by marriage, age, and profession. Lastly, in placing your guests, regard is rather to be had to birth than fortune ; for though purse-pride is forward enough to exalt itself, it bears a degradation with more secret comfort and ease than the former, as being more inwardly satisfied with itself, and less apprehensive of neglect or contempt.

The order in helping your guests is to be regulated by that of placing them ; but here I must, with great sub-

mission, recommend to the lady at the upper end of the table, to distribute her favours as equally and as impartially as she can. I have sometimes seen a large dish of fish extend no farther than to the fifth person, and a haunch of venison lose all its fat before half the table had tasted it.

A single request to eat of any particular dish, how elegant soever, is the utmost I allow. I strictly prohibit all earnest solicitations, all complaints that you have no appetite, which are sometimes little less than burlesque, and always impertinent and troublesome.

And here, however low it may appear to some readers, as I have known omissions of this kind give offence, and sometimes make the offenders, who have been very well-meaning persons, ridiculous, I cannot help mentioning the ceremonial of drinking healths at table, which is always to begin with the lady's and next the master's of the house.

When dinner is ended, and the ladies retired, though I do not hold the master of the feast obliged to fuddle himself through complacence (and, indeed, it is his own fault generally, if his company be such as would desire it) yet he is to see that the bottle circulates sufficient to afford every person present a moderate quantity of wine, if he chooses it; at the same time permitting those who desire it, either to pass the bottle, or fill their glass as they please. Indeed, the beastly custom of besotting, and ostentatious contention for pre-eminence in their cups, seems at present pretty well abolished among the better sort of people.—*An Essay on Conversation.*

#### 4. The Migration of Souls.

WE now came to the banks of the great river Cocytus, where we quitted our vehicle, and passed the water in a boat,

after which we were obliged to travel on foot the rest of our journey; and now we met, for the first time, several passengers travelling to the world we had left, who informed us they were souls going into the flesh.

The two first we met were walking arm and arm in very close and friendly conference; they informed us that one of them was intended for a duke, and the other for a hackney-coachman. As we had not yet arrived at the place where we were to deposit our passions, we were all surprised at the familiarity which subsisted between persons of such different degrees; nor could the grave lady help expressing her astonishment at it. The future coachman then replied with a laugh, that they had exchanged lots; for that the duke had with his dukedom drawn a shrew for a wife, and the coachman only a single state.

As we proceeded on our journey, we met a solemn spirit walking alone with great gravity in his countenance: our curiosity invited us, notwithstanding his reserve, to ask what lot he had drawn. He answered with a smile, he was to have the reputation of a wise man with 100,000*l.* in his pocket, and that he was practising the solemnity which he was to act in the other world.

A little farther we met a company of very merry spirits, whom we imagined by their mirth to have drawn some mighty lot, but, on enquiry, they informed us they were to be beggars.

The farther we advanced, the greater numbers we met; and now we discovered two large roads leading different ways, and of very different appearance; the one all craggy with rocks, full as it seemed of boggy grounds, and everywhere beset with briars, so that it was impossible to pass through it without the utmost danger and difficulty; the other, the most delightful imaginable, leading through the

most verdant meadows, painted and perfumed with all kinds of beautiful flowers; in short, the most wanton imagination could imagine nothing more lovely. Notwithstanding which, we were surprised to see great numbers crowding into the former, and only one or two solitary spirits choosing the latter. On enquiry, we were acquainted that the bad road was the way to Greatness, and the other to Goodness. When we expressed our surprise at the preference given to the former, we were acquainted that it was chosen for the sake of the music of drums and trumpets, and the perpetual acclamations of the mob, with which those who travelled this way were constantly saluted. We were told likewise, that there were several noble palaces to be seen, and lodged in, on this road, by those who had past through the difficulties of it (which indeed many were not able to surmount), and great quantities of all sorts of treasure to be found in it; whereas the other had little inviting more than the beauty of the way, scarce a handsome building, save one greatly resembling a certain house by the Bath, to be seen during that whole journey; and lastly, that it was thought very scandalous and mean-spirited to travel through this, and as highly honourable and noble to pass by the other.

We now heard a violent noise, when, casting our eyes forward, we perceived a vast number of spirits advancing in pursuit of one whom they mocked and insulted in all kinds of scorn. I cannot give my reader a more adequate idea of this scene than by comparing it to an English mob conducting a pickpocket to the water; or by supposing that an incensed audience at a playhouse had unhappily possessed themselves of the miserable damned poet. Some laughed, some hissed, some squalled, some groaned, some bawled, some spit at him, some threw dirt at him. It was impossible not to ask who or what the wretched spirit was, whom

they treated in this barbarous manner; when to our great surprise, we were informed that it was a king: we were likewise told that this manner of behaviour was usual among the spirits to those who drew the lots of emperors, kings, and other great men, not from envy or anger, but mere derision and contempt of earthly grandeur: that nothing was more common than for those who had drawn these great prizes (as to us they seemed) to exchange them with tailors and cobblers; and that Alexander the Great, and Diogenes, had formerly done so: he that was afterwards Diogenes, having originally fallen on the lot of Alexander.

And now, on a sudden, the mockery ceased, and the king spirit, having obtained a hearing, began to speak as follows: for we were now near enough to hear him distinctly.

‘GENTLEMEN,

‘I AM justly surprised at your treating me in this manner; since whatever lot I have drawn, I did not choose: if therefore it be worthy of derision, you should compassionate me, for it might have fallen to any of your shares. I know in how low a light the station to which fate hath assigned me is considered here, and that, when ambition doth not support it, it becomes generally so intolerable, that there is scarce any other condition for which it is not gladly exchanged: for what portion, in the world to which we are going, is so miserable as that of care? Should I therefore consider myself as become by this lot essentially your superior, and of a higher order of being than the rest of my fellow-creatures: should I foolishly imagine myself without wisdom superior to the wise, without knowledge to the learned, without courage to the brave, and without goodness and virtue to the good and virtuous; surely so preposterous, so absurd a pride, would justly render me the object of



*HENRY FIELDING.*

ridicule. But far be it from me to entertain it. And yet, gentlemen, I prize the lot I have drawn, nor would I exchange it with any of yours, seeing it is in my eye so much greater than the rest. Ambition, which I own myself possessed of, teaches me this; ambition, which makes me covet praise, assures me that I shall enjoy a much larger portion of it than can fall within your power either to deserve or obtain. I am then superior to you all, when I am able to do more good, and when I execute that power. What the father is to the son, the guardian to the orphan, or the patron to his client, that am I to you. You are my children, to whom I will be a father, a guardian, and a patron. Not one evening in my long reign (for so it is to be) will I repose myself to rest, without the glorious, the heart-warming consideration, that thousands that night owe their sweetest rest to me. What a delicious fortune is it to him, whose strongest appetite is doing good, to have every day the opportunity and the power of satisfying it! If such a man hath ambition, how happy is it for him to be seated so on high that every act blazes abroad, and attracts to him praises tainted with neither sarcasm nor adulation; but such as the nicest and most delicate mind may relish! Thus, therefore, while you derive your good from me, I am your superior. If to my strict distribution of justice you owe the safety of your property from domestic enemies: if by my vigilance and valour you are protected from foreign foes: if by my encouragement of genuine industry, every science, every art which can embellish or sweeten life, is produced and flourishes among you; will any of you be so insensible or ungrateful, as to deny praise and respect to him, by whose care and conduct you enjoy these blessings? I wonder not at the censure which so frequently falls on those in my station: but I wonder that those in my station so frequently deserve

it. What strange perverseness of nature ! What wanton delight in mischief must taint his composition, who prefers dangers, difficulty, and disgrace, by doing evil, to safety, ease, and honour, by doing good ? who refuses happiness in the other world ; and heaven in this, for misery there and hell here ? But be assured, my intentions are different. I shall always endeavour the ease, the happiness, and the glory of my people, being confident that, by so doing, I take the most certain method of procuring them all to myself.'—He then struck directly into the road of goodness, and received such a shout of applause, as I never remember to have heard equalled.

He was gone a little way when a spirit limped after him, swearing he would fetch him back. This spirit I was presently informed, was one who had drawn the lot of his prime minister. . . .

Fortune now stationed me in a character, which the ingratitude of mankind hath put them on ridiculing, though they owe to it not only a relief from the inclemencies of cold, to which they would otherwise be exposed, but likewise a considerable satisfaction of their vanity. The character I mean was that of a tailor ; which, if we consider it with due attention, must be confessed to have in it great dignity and importance. For, in reality, who constitutes the different degrees between men but the tailor ? the prince indeed gives the title, but it is the tailor who makes the man. To his labours are owing the respect of crowds, and the awe which great men inspire into their beholders, though these are too often unjustly attributed to other motives. Lastly, the admiration of the fair is most commonly to be placed to his account.

I was just set up in my trade when I made three suits of fine clothes for King Stephen's coronation. I question

whether the person, who wears the rich coat, hath so much pleasure and vanity in being admired in it as we tailors have from that admiration ; and perhaps a philosopher would say he is not so well entitled to it. I bustled on the day of the ceremony through the crowd, and it was with incredible delight I heard several say, as my clothes walked by, Bless me, was ever any thing so fine as the Earl of Devonshire ! Sure he and Sir Hugh Bigot are the two best dressed men I ever saw. Now both of those suits were of my making.

There would indeed be infinite pleasure in working for the courtiers, as they are generally genteel men, and show one's clothes to the best advantage, was it not for one small discouragement ; this is, that they never pay. I solemnly protest, though I lost almost as much by the court in my life as I got by the city, I never carried a suit into the latter with half the satisfaction which I have done to the former ; though from that I was certain of ready money, and from this almost as certain of no money at all.

Courtiers may, however, be divided into two sorts, very essentially different from each other ; into those who never intend to pay for their clothes ; and those who do intend to pay for them, but never happen to be able. Of the latter sort are many of those young gentlemen whom we equip out for the army, and who are, unhappily for us, cut off before they arrive at preferment. This is the reason that tailors in time of war are mistaken for politicians by their inquisitiveness into the event of battles, one campaign very often proving the ruin of half a dozen of us. I am sure I had frequent reason to curse that fatal battle of Cardigan, where the Welch defeated some of King Stephen's best troops, and where many a good suit of raine, unpaid for, fell to the ground.

The gentlemen of this honourable calling have fared much

better in later ages than when I was of it; for now it seems the fashion is, when they apprehend their customer is not in the best circumstances, if they are not paid as soon as they carry home the suit, they charge him in their book as much again as it is worth, and then send a gentleman with a small scrip of parchment to demand the money. If this be not immediately paid, the gentleman takes the beau with him to his house, where he locks him up till the tailor is contented: but in my time these scrips of parchment were not in use; and if the beau disliked paying for his clothes, as very often happened, we had no method of compelling him.

In several of the characters which I have related to you I apprehend I have sometimes forgot myself, and considered myself as really interested as I was when I personated them on earth. I have just now caught myself in the fact; for I have complained to you as bitterly of my customers as I formerly used to do when I was the tailor: but, in reality, though there were some few persons of very great quality, and some others, who never paid their debts; yet those were but a few, and I had a method of repairing this loss. My customers I divided under three heads: those who paid ready money, those who paid slow, and those who never paid at all. The first of these, I considered apart by themselves, as persons by whom I got a certain but small profit. The two last I lumped together, making those who paid slow contribute to repair my losses by those who did not pay at all. Thus, upon the whole, I was a very inconsiderable loser, and might have left a fortune to my family, had I not launched forth into expenses which swallowed up all my gains. I had a wife, and two children. These indeed I kept frugally enough; for I half starved them. . . . I kept likewise a brace of hunters, rather for that it was fashionable so to do than for any great delight I took in the sport, which

I very little attended; not for want of leisure, for few noble-men had so much. All the work I ever did was taking measure, and that only of my greatest and best customers. I scarce ever cut a piece of cloth in my life, nor was indeed much more able to fashion a coat than any gentleman in the kingdom. This made a skilful servant too necessary to me. He knew I must submit to any terms with, or any treatment from, him. He knew it was easier for him to find another such a tailor as me, than for me to procure such another workman as him: for this reason, he exerted the most notorious and cruel tyranny, seldom giving me a civil word: nor could the utmost condescension on my side, though attended with continual presents and rewards, and raising his wages, content or please him. In a word, he was as absolutely my master as was ever an ambitious, industrious prime minister over an indolent and voluptuous king. All my other journeymen paid more respect to him than to me; for they considered my favour as a necessary consequence of obtaining his.

These were the most remarkable occurrences while I acted this part.—*A Journey from this World to the Next.*

## XXXV.

### SAMUEL JOHNSON.

1709-1784.

SAMUEL JOHNSON was born at Lichfield in 1709. His father was a bookseller in that city. He received his early education at the Free School under Mr. Hawkins. He was distinguished in childhood less for application or the love of learning than for an extraordinary tenacity of memory which he retained down to old age. His reading was rambling, rapid, and desultory, but he hoarded up knowledge. For about two years before going up to Oxford he was at Stourbridge School, whence he entered Pembroke College, accompanying thither a young gentleman commoner, to whom he acted as tutor. He left Oxford, unable through poverty, to take a degree, though by the aid of friends he had completed three years of residence. From the University he returned to Lichfield, where at the close of 1731, his father died, leaving him an estate of £20, and the charge of the support of his mother. To meet this obligation, Johnson became usher at a school, and this task proving ungrateful, he turned to his first literary occupation as a translator. On his marriage, in 1736, he again attempted teaching, opening an academy near Lichfield, where Garrick was his pupil. This undertaking also failed, and in 1737 he and Garrick betook themselves together to London as candidates for the same which awaited them. Johnson now began the struggle of a literary life, and continued it with ever increasing renown, but with uncertain pecuniary success, until in 1762 he received the grant of £300 a-year from the Crown as the reward of his labours in the field of letters. The last twenty years of his life were passed in comparative ease, chequered only

by the loss of friends and by the ill health which beset his latter days. He died in 1784, and was buried with honour in Westminster Abbey, near to the monument of Shakespeare, and close beside the grave of Garrick.

Johnson was the chief literary man of his time; he wrote poems, moral and controversial essays, and biographies. While he composed these, he also prepared his celebrated *English Dictionary*, which appeared in 1755. His best known works are two satires, in verse, written in imitation of Juvenal, *London*, and the *Vanity of Human Wishes*; moral essays, published in the *Rambler* and the *Idler*; *Rasselas*, which was written to defray the expense of his mother's funeral, and to pay her last debts; his edition of *Shakespeare*, and his *Lives of the Poets* were his most important publications subsequent to the appearance of the *Dictionary*.

Johnson is, perhaps, best known through his *Life* by Boswell. It has been said of him, that while the lives of other authors were known because of their writings, his writings are known because of his life. That this is so, is due in part to his having found in Boswell an incomparable biographer. It is due also to the fact that Johnson occupied a peculiar position. In his time the world of literature was a comparatively small world, the members of which were well known to each other, and marked off from the rest of society as a distinct class. Over this world Johnson ruled as undisputed king. He held his position mainly by his unparalleled powers of conversation, but he was also, from the fame of his writings, the acknowledged head of the literary profession.

His satires, his controversial works, his moral essays, and even his dictionary, were among the most popular works of their day, and were considered no less remarkable for beauty of style than for vigour of thought. The verdict of posterity has not altogether ratified the judgment of Johnson's contemporaries. His style, which was the source of his popularity, in the 18th century, injures his reputation with modern readers. His settled preference for words derived from Latin sources is opposed to modern taste, and frequently gives to his sentences an air of cumbrous pedantry. Moreover, his thoughts are more remark-

able for their vigorous good sense than for their originality or profoundness. As a critic, he displays far more acuteness than subtlety, and rarely criticises with effect any writers but those who, like Pope, belong to his own school of sentiment. Yet, on the whole, the *Lives of the Poets* are the best of his works. These *Lives* are written in a style which is dignified without being pedantic, and contain many striking and noteworthy reflections. It is, in fact, Johnson's great merit, that he never wrote unless he had something to say, and that he could always express exactly what he meant to say in precise language. Few writers who have filled as many volumes, have written as little that was not worth writing as Johnson.

### 1. The Happy Valley.

THE place, which the wisdom, or policy, of antiquity had destined for the residence of the Abissinan princes, was a spacious valley in the kingdom of Amhara, surrounded, on every side, by mountains, of which the summits overhang the middle part. The only passage, by which it could be entered, was a cavern that passed under a rock, of which it has been long disputed, whether it was the work of nature, or of human industry. The outlet of the cavern was concealed by a thick wood, and the mouth, which opened into the valley, was closed with gates of iron, forged by the artificers of ancient days, so massy, that no man could, without the help of engines, open or shut them.

From the mountains, on every side, rivulets descended, that filled all the valley with verdure and fertility, and formed a lake in the middle, inhabited by fish of every species, and frequented by every fowl, whom nature has taught to dip the wing in water. This lake discharged its superfluities by a stream, which entered a dark cleft of



the mountain, on the northern side, and fell, with dreadful noise, from precipice to precipice, till it was heard no more.

The sides of the mountains were covered with trees; the banks of the brooks were diversified with flowers; every blast shook spices from the rocks; and every month dropped fruits upon the ground. All animals that bite the grass, or browse the shrub, whether wild or tame, wandered in this extensive circuit, secured from beasts of prey, by the mountains which confined them. On one part, were flocks and herds feeding in the pastures; on another, all the beasts of chase frisking in the lawns; the sprightly kid was bounding on the rocks, the subtle monkey frolicking in the trees, and the solemn elephant reposing in the shade. All the diversities of the world were brought together, the blessings of nature were collected, and its evils extracted and excluded.

The valley, wide and fruitful, supplied its inhabitants with the necessaries of life; and all delights and superfluities were added, at the annual visit which the emperor paid his children, when the iron gate was opened to the sound of musick; and during eight days every one, that resided in the valley, was required to propose whatever might contribute to make seclusion pleasant, to fill up the vacancies of attention, and lessen the tediousness of time. Every desire was immediately granted. All the artificers of pleasure were called to gladden the festivity; the musicians exerted the power of harmony, and the dancers showed their activity before the princes, in hope that they should pass their lives in this blissful captivity, to which those only were admitted, whose performance was thought able to add novelty to luxury. Such was the appearance of security and delight, which this retirement afforded, that

they, to whom it was new, always desired, that it might be perpetual; and, as those, on whom the iron gate had once closed, were never suffered to return, the effect of long experience could not be known. Thus every year produced new schemes of delight, and new competitors for imprisonment.—*History of Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia.*

## 2. Pope.

OF Pope's social qualities, if an estimate be made from his letters, an opinion too favourable cannot easily be formed; they exhibit a perpetual and unclouded effulgence of general benevolence and particular fondness. There is nothing but liberality, gratitude, constancy, and tenderness. It has been so long said, as to be commonly believed, that the true characters of men may be found in their letters, and that he that writes to his friend, lays his heart open before him. But the truth is, that such were the simple friendships of the 'Golden Age,' and are now the friendships only of children. Very few can boast of hearts which they dare lay open to themselves, and of which, by whatever accident exposed, they do not shun a distinct and continued view; and certainly what we hide from ourselves, we do not shew to our friends. There is, indeed, no transaction which offers stronger temptations to fallacy and sophistication than epistolary intercourse. In the eagerness of conversation the first emotions of the mind often burst out before they are considered; in the tumult of business, interest and passion have their genuine effect; but a friendly letter is a calm and deliberate performance in the cool of leisure; in the stillness of solitude, and surely no man sits down to depreciate by design his own character.

Friendship has no tendency to secure veracity; for by

whom can a man so much wish to be thought better than he is, as by him whose kindness he desires to give or keep? Even in writing to the world there is less constraint; the author is ~~not~~ confronted with his reader, and takes his chance of approbation among the different dispositions of mankind; but a letter is addressed to a single mind, of which the prejudices and partialities are known; and must therefore please, if not by favouring them, by forbearing to oppose them.

To charge those favourable representations, which men give of their own minds, with the guilt of hypocritical falsehood, would shew more severity than knowledge. The writer commonly believes himself. Almost every man's thoughts, while they are general, are right; and most hearts are pure while temptation is away. It is easy to awaken generous sentiments in privacy; to despise death when there is no danger; to glow with benevolence when there is nothing to be given. While such ideas are formed, they are felt; and self-love does not suspect the gleam of virtue to be the meteor of fancy.

If the letters of Pope are considered merely as compositions, they seem to be premeditated and artificial. It is one thing to write, because there is something which the mind wishes to discharge; and another to solicit the imagination, because ceremony or vanity require something to be written. Pope confesses his early letters to be vitiated with affectation and ambition: to know whether he disentangled himself from these perverters of epistolary integrity, his book and his life must be set in comparison.

Of his intellectual character, the constituent and fundamental principle was good sense, a prompt and intuitive perception of consonance and propriety. He saw immediately, of his own conceptions, what was to be chosen,

and what to be rejected; and, in the works of others, what was to be shunned, and what was to be copied.

But good sense alone is a sedate and quiescent quality, which manages its possessions well, but does not increase them; it collects few materials for its own operations, and preserves safety, but never gains supremacy. Pope had likewise genius; a mind active, ambitious, and adventurous, always investigating, always aspiring; in its widest searches still longing to go forward, in its highest flights still wishing to be higher; always imagining something greater than it knows, always endeavouring more than it can do.

To assist these powers, he is said to have had great strength and exactness of memory. That which he had heard or read was not easily lost; and he had before him not only what his own meditations suggested, but what he had found in other writers that might be accommodated to his present purpose.

These benefits of nature he improved by incessant and unwearied diligence; he had recourse to every source of intelligence, and lost no opportunity of information; he consulted the living as well as the dead; he read his compositions to his friends, and was never content with mediocrity, when excellence could be attained. He considered poetry as the business of his life; and, however he might seem to lament his occupation, he followed it with constancy; to make verses was his first labour, and to mend them was his last.

From his attention to poetry he was never diverted. If conversation offered any thing that could be improved, he committed it to paper; if a thought, or perhaps an expression more happy than was common, rose to his mind, he was careful to write it; an independent distich was preserved for an opportunity of insertion; and some little

fragments have been found containing lines, or parts of lines, to be wrought upon at some other time.

He was one of those few whose labour is their pleasure : he was never elevated to negligence, nor wearied to impatience ; he never passed a fault unamended by indifference, nor quitted it by despair. He laboured his works first to gain reputation, and afterwards to keep it.—*Lives of the English Poets.*

### 3. Shenstone.

Now was excited his delight in rural pleasures, and his ambition of rural elegance : he began from this time to point his prospects, to diversify his surface, to entangle his walks, and to wind his waters ; which he did with such judgment and such fancy, as made his little domain the envy of the great and the admiration of the skilful ; a place to be visited by travellers, and copied by designers. Whether to plant a walk in undulating curves, and to place a bench at every turn where there is an object to catch the view ; to make water run where it will be heard, and to stagnate where it will be seen ; to leave intervals where the eye will be pleased, and to thicken the plantation where there is something to be hidden, demands any great powers of mind, I will not enquire : perhaps a surly and sullen spectator may think such performances rather the sport than the business of human reason. But it must be at least confessed, that to embellish the form of nature is an innocent amusement ; and some praise must be allowed by the most supercilious observer to him who does best what such multitudes are contending to do well.

This praise was the praise of Shenstone ; but, like all other modes of felicity, it was not enjoyed without its abatements. Lyttleton was his neighbour, and his rival, whose

empire, spacious and opulent, looked with disdain on the petty state that appeared behind it. For awhile the inhabitants of Hagley affected to tell their acquaintance of the little fellow who was trying to make himself admired; but when by degrees the Leasowes forced themselves into notice, they took care to defeat the curiosity which they could not suppress, by conducting their visitors perversely to inconvenient points of view, and introducing them at the wrong end of a walk to detect a deception; injuries of which Shenstone would heavily complain. Where there is emulation there will be vanity, and where there is vanity there will be folly.

The pleasure of Shenstone was all in his eye: he valued what he valued merely for its looks; nothing raised his indignation more than to ask if there were any fishes in his water.

His house was mean, and he did not improve it; his care was of the grounds. When he came home from his walks, he might find his floors flooded by a shower through the broken roof, but could spare no money for its reparation.

In time, his expenses brought clamours about him that overpowered the lamb's bleat and the linnet's song; and his groves were haunted by beings very different from fawns and fairies. He spent his estate in adorning it, and his death was probably hastened by his anxieties. He was a lamp that spent its oil in blazing. It is said, that "if he had lived a little longer he would have been assisted by a pension: such bounty could not have been ever more properly bestowed; but that it was never asked is not certain; it is too certain that it never was enjoyed.—*Lives of the English Poets.*

#### 4. Pamphlets.

THE boundless liberty with which every man may write his own thoughts, and the opportunity of conveying new sentiments to the public, without danger of suffering either ridicule or censure, which every man may enjoy, whose vanity does not incite him too hastily to own his performances, naturally invites those who employ themselves in speculation, to try how their notions will be received by a nation, which exempts caution from fear, and modesty from shame; and it is no wonder, that where reputation may be gained, but needs not be lost, multitudes are willing to try their fortune, and thrust their opinions into the light; sometimes with unsuccessful haste, and sometimes with happy temerity. . . .

All these, and many other causes, too tedious to be enumerated, have contributed to make pamphlets and small tracts a very important part of an *English* library; nor are there any pieces, upon which those, who aspire to the reputation of judicious collectors of books, bestow more attention, or greater expense; because many advantages may be expected from the perusal of these small productions, which are scarcely to be found in that of larger works.

If we regard history, it is well known, that most political treatises have for a long time appeared in this form, and that the first relations of transactions, while they are yet the subject of conversation, divide the opinions, and employ the conjectures of mankind, are delivered by these petty writers, who have opportunities of collecting the different sentiments of disputants, of enquiring the truth from living witnesses, and of copying their representations from the life; and, therefore, they preserve a multitude of particular

incidents, which are forgotten in a short time, or omitted in formal relations, and which are yet to be considered as sparks of truth, which, when united, may afford light in some of the darkest scenes of state, as, we doubt not, will be sufficiently proved in the course of this miscellany; and which it is, therefore, the interest of the public to preserve unextinguished.

The same observation may be extended to subjects of yet more importance. In controversies that relate to the truths of religion, the first essays of reformation are generally timorous; and those, who have opinions to offer, which they expect to be opposed, produce their sentiments, by degrees, and, for the most part, in small tracts: by degrees; that they may not shock their readers with too many novelties at once; and in small tracts, that they may be easily dispersed, or privately printed: almost every controversy, therefore, has been, for a time, carried on in pamphlets, nor has swelled into larger volumes, till the first ardour of the disputants has subsided, and they have recollected their notions with coolness enough to digest them into order, consolidate them into systems, and fortify them with authorities.

From pamphlets, consequently, are to be learned the progress of every debate; the various state to which the questions have been changed; the artifices and fallacies which have been used, and the subterfuges by which reason has been eluded: in such writings may be seen how the mind has been opened by degrees, how one truth has led to another, how error has been disentangled, and hints improved to demonstration, which pleasure, and many others, are lost by him that only reads the larger writers, by whom these scattered sentiments are collected, who will see none of the changes of fortune which every opinion



has passed through, will have no opportunity of remarking the transient advantages which error may sometimes obtain, by the artifices of its patron, or the successful rallies by which truth regains the day, after a repulse; but will be to him, who traces the dispute through into particular gradations, as he that hears of a victory, to him that sees the battle.

Since the advantages of preserving these small tracts are so numerous, our attempt to unite them in volumes cannot be thought either useless or unseasonable; for there is no other method of securing them from accidents; and they have already been so long neglected, that this design cannot be delayed, without hazarding the loss of many pieces, which deserve to be transmitted to another age.

The practice of publishing pamphlets on the most important subjects, has now prevailed more than two centuries among us; and therefore it cannot be doubted, but that, as no large collections have been yet made, many curious tracts must have perished; but it is too late to lament that loss; nor ought we to reflect upon it, with any other view, than that of quickening our endeavours for the preservation of those that yet remain; of which we have now a greater number, than was, perhaps, ever amassed by any one person.—*Essay on the Origin and Importance of Fugitive Pieces.*

##### 5. *Pereunt et imputantur.*

POLITIAN, a name eminent among the restorers of polite literature, when he published a collection of epigrams, prefixed to many of them the year of his age at which they were composed. He might design by this information, either to boast the early maturity of his genius, or to conciliate indulgence to the puerility of his performances.

But whatever was his intent, it is remarked by *Scaliger*, that he very little promoted his own reputation, because he fell below the promise which his first productions had given, and in the latter part of his life seldom equalled the sallies of his youth.

It is not uncommon for those who at their first entrance into the world were distinguished for attainments or abilities, to disappoint the hopes which they had raised, and to end in neglect and obscurity that life which they began in celebrity and honour. To the long catalogue of the inconveniencies of old age, which moral and satirical writers have so copiously displayed, may be often added the loss of fame.

The advance of the human mind towards any object of laudable pursuit, may be compared to the progress of a body driven by a blow. It moves for a time with great velocity and vigour, but the force of the first impulse is perpetually decreasing, and though it should encounter no obstacle capable of quelling it by a sudden stop, the resistance of the medium through which it passes, and the latent inequalities of the smoothest surface, will in a short time, by continued retardation, wholly overpower it. Some hindrances will be found in every road of life, but he that fixes his eyes upon any thing at a distance, necessarily loses sight of all that fills up the intermediate space, and therefore sets forward with alacrity and confidence, nor suspects a thousand obstacles by which he afterwards finds his passage embarrassed and obstructed. Some are indeed stopped at once in their career by a sudden shock of calamity, or diverted to a different direction by the cross impulse of some violent passion; but far the greater part languish by slow degrees, deviate at first into slight obliquities and themselves scarcely perceive at what time their ardour

forsook them, or when they lost sight of their original design.

Weariness and negligence are perpetually prevailing by silent encroachments, assisted by different causes, and not observed till they cannot, without great difficulty, be opposed. Labour necessarily requires pauses of ease and relaxation, and the deliciousness of ease commonly makes us unwilling to return to labour. We, perhaps, prevail upon ourselves to renew our attempts, but eagerly listen to every argument for frequent interpositions of amusement; for, when indolence has once entered upon the mind, it can scarcely be dispossessed but by such efforts as very few are willing to exert.

It is the fate of industry to be equally endangered by miscarriage and success, by confidence and despondency. He that engages in a great undertaking, with a false opinion of its facility, or too high conceptions of his own strength, is easily discouraged by the first hindrance of his advances, because he had promised himself an equal and perpetual progression without impediment or disturbance; when unexpected interruptions break in upon him, he is in the state of a man surprised by a tempest, where he purposed only to bask in the calm, or sport in the shallows.

It is not only common to find the difficulty of an enterprise greater, but the profit less, than hope had pictured it. Youth enters the world with very happy prejudices in her own favour. She imagines herself not only certain of accomplishing every adventure, but of obtaining those rewards which the accomplishment may deserve. She is not easily persuaded to believe that the force of merit can be resisted by obstinacy and avarice, or its lustre darkened by envy and malignity. She has not yet learned that the most evident claims to praise or preferment may be rejected

by malice against conviction, or by indolence without examination; that they may be sometimes defeated by artifices, and sometimes overborne by clamour; that, in the mingled numbers of mankind, many need no other provocation to enmity than that they find themselves excelled; that others have ceased their curiosity, and consider every man who fills the mouth of report with a new name, as an intruder upon their retreat, and disturber of their repose; that some are engaged in complications of interest which they imagine endangered by every innovation; that many yield themselves up implicitly to every report which hatred disseminates or folly scatters; and that whoever aspires to the notice of the public, has in almost every man an enemy and a rival; and must struggle with the opposition of the daring, and elude the stratagems of the timorous, must quicken the frigid and soften the obdurate, must reclaim perverseness and inform stupidity.

It is no wonder that when the prospect of reward has vanished, the zeal of enterprize should cease; for who would persevere to cultivate the soil which he has, after long labour, discovered to be barren? He who hath pleased himself with anticipated praises, and expected that he should meet in every place with patronage or friendship, will soon remit his vigour, when he finds that, from those who desire to be considered as his admirers, nothing can be hoped but cold civility, and that many refuse to own his excellence, lest they should be too justly expected to reward it.

A man, thus cut off from the prospect of that port to which his address and fortitude had been employed to steer him, often abandons himself to chance and to the wind, and glides careless and idle down the current of life, without resolution to make another effort, till he is swallowed up by the gulf of mortality.

Others are betrayed to the same desertion of themselves

by a contrary fallacy. It was said of *Hannibal* that he wanted nothing to the completion of his martial virtues, but that when he had gained a victory he should know how to use it. The folly of desisting too soon from successful labours, and the haste of enjoying advantages before they are secured, are often fatal to men of impetuous desire, to men whose consciousness of uncommon powers fills them with presumption, and who, having borne opposition down before them, and left emulation panting behind, are early persuaded to imagine that they have reached the heights of perfection, and that now, being no longer in danger from competitors, they may pass the rest of their days in the enjoyment of their acquisitions, in contemplation of their own superiority, and in attention to their own praises, and look unconcerned from their eminence upon the toils and contentions of meaner beings.

It is not sufficiently considered in the hour of exultation, that all human excellence is comparative; that no man performs much but in proportion to what others accomplish, or to the time and opportunities which have been allowed him; and that he who stops at any point of excellence is every day sinking in estimation, because his improvement grows continually more incommensurate to his life. Yet, as no man willingly quits opinions favourable to himself, they who have once been justly celebrated, imagine that they still have the same pretensions to regard, and seldom perceive the diminution of their character while there is time to recover it. Nothing then remains but murmurs and remorse; for if the spendthrift's poverty be embittered by the reflection that he once was rich, how must the idler's obscurity be clouded by remembering that he once had lustre!

These errors all arise from an original mistake of the true

motives of action. He that never extends his view beyond the praises or rewards of men, will be dejected by neglect and envy, or infatuated by honours and applause. But the consideration that life is only deposited in his hands to be employed in obedience to a Master who will regard his endeavours, not his success, would have preserved him trivial elations and discouragements, and enabled him to proceed with constancy and cheerfulness, neither enervated by commendation, nor intimidated by censure.—*Rambler*, No. 127.

#### 6. To the Earl of Chesterfield.

MY LORD—I have lately been informed, by the proprietor of *The World*, that two papers, in which my Dictionary is recommended to the publick, were written by your lordship. To be so distinguished is an honour, which, being very little accustomed to favours from the great, I know not well how to receive, or in what terms to acknowledge.

When, upon some slight encouragement, I first visited your lordship, I was overpowered, like the rest of mankind, by the enchantment of your address, and could not forbear to wish that I might boast myself *le vainqueur du vainqueur de la terre*,—that I might obtain that regard for which I saw the world contending; but I found my attendance so little encouraged, that neither pride nor modesty would suffer me to continue it. When once I had addressed your lordship in publick, I had exhausted all the art of pleasing which a retired and uncourtly scholar can possess. I had done all that I could; and no man is well pleased to have his all neglected, be it ever so little.

Seven years, my lord, have now passed, since I waited in your outward rooms, or was repulsed from your door; during

which time I have been pushing on my work through difficulties, of which it is useless to complain, and have brought it, at last, to the verge of publication, without one act of assistance, one word of encouragement, or one smile of favour. Such treatment I did not expect, for I never had a patron before.

The shepherd in Virgil grew at last acquainted with Love, and found him a native of the rocks.

Is not a patron, my lord, one who looks with unconcern on a man struggling for life in the water, and, when he has reached the ground, encumbers him with help? The notice which you have been pleased to take of my labours, had it been early, had been kind; but it has been delayed till I am indifferent, and cannot enjoy it; till I am solitary, and cannot impart it; till I am known, and do not want it. I hope it is no very cynical asperity, not to confess obligations when no benefit has been received, or to be unwilling that the publick should consider me as owing that to a patron, which Providence has enabled me to do for myself.

Having carried on my work thus far with so little obligation to any favourer of learning, I shall not be disappointed though I should conclude it, if less be possible, with less; for I have long been wakened from that dream of hope, in which I once boasted myself with so much exultation. My lord, your lordship's most humble, most obedient servant. •

SAMUEL JOHNSON.

## XXXVI.

### DAVID HUME.

1711-1776.

DAVID HUME was born at Edinburgh in 1711, and died there in 1776. His father was a small Scottish laird of the great Border clan of Home or Hume. His mother was a daughter of Sir David Falconer, President of the College of Justice. She was a woman of singular merit; and being left a widow with several young children, devoted herself to their education. David, the second son, was left with a very slender inheritance, and it was resolved that he should try his fortunes at the law. But this study was distasteful to him, and for a few months he entered the house of a merchant at Bristol. Trade, however, he disliked even more than law, and at twenty-three he resolved to devote his life to philosophy and literature. For the next three years he lived with great frugality in a French country town, where he wrote his *Treatise on Human Nature*, and then came to London to publish it. At his brother's house in Scotland he heard that it had fallen 'dead-born from the press.' He continued to reside with his brother for some years, and in 1742 published the first part of his *Essays*, which were received somewhat more favourably. His studious habits were a few years later interrupted by an engagement to serve as secretary to General Sinclair, during that officer's military embassy to Vienna and Turin. Returning to his brother's hospitable house, he published in 1751 the second part of his *Essays*, and recast the first part. This first part related to the Principles of Morals, and he considered it his best work; but it failed to achieve so high a place in popular esteem as the political discourses which formed the second part.



He now made Edinburgh his head-quarters, and being appointed Librarian to the Faculty of Advocates, obtained what he chiefly valued, a great command of books. This led him to historical studies; and in 1754 he published his *History of Charles I.* But his first trial in this department met with no encouragement; in twelve months only forty-five copies were sold. Notwithstanding, in two years' time he put out a continuation of the *History of the Stuarts, from the Death of Charles I to the Revolution of 1688*; and this volume had much greater success. Partly by this history, but still more by the *Natural History of Religion*, which appeared about the same time, he gained a character for irreligion. In the following year he completed his *History of England*; the *House of Tudor* furnishing the subject of his next volumes, and the *Early Annals* being published last in order.

His name had now become famous; and in 1763, when he visited Paris as attached to Lord Hertford's Embassy, he was received by the literary society of that city with extraordinary enthusiasm. Returning to England in 1766, he was appointed Under-Secretary of State by General Conway, brother of Lord Hertford, and served for two or three years in the Home Office. In 1769 he retired for the last time to Edinburgh, in the possession of a handsome income. But in 1775 he was attacked by a lingering disorder, which he bore with unflinching patience and cheerfulness till he died in his sixty-fifth year.

The philosophical opinions of this eminent man, especially in their bearing on theological subjects, cannot be discussed in this place. The style in which he wrote reflects his character with great exactness: it is simple and luminous; not calculated to raise high admiration or greatly excite the feelings, but seldom failing to win the reader by its singular grace and unaffected ease.

### 1. Eloquence in Ancient and Modern Times.

It is seldom or never found, when a false taste in poetry or eloquence prevails among any people, that it has been

preferred to a true, upon comparison and reflection. It commonly prevails merely from ignorance of the true, and from the want of perfect models to lead men into a juster apprehension, and more refined relish of those productions of genius. When *these* appear, they soon unite all suffrages in their favour, and, by their natural and powerful charms, gain over even the most prejudiced to the love and admiration of them. The principles of every passion, and of every sentiment, is in every man; and, when touched properly, they rise to life, and warm the heart, and convey that satisfaction, by which a work of genius is distinguished from the adulterate beauties of a capricious wit and fancy. And, if this observation be true, with regard to all the liberal arts, it must be peculiarly so with regard to eloquence; which, being merely calculated for the public, and for men of the world, cannot, with any pretence of reason, appeal from the people to more refined judges, but must submit to the public verdict without reserve or limitation. Whoever, upon comparison, is deemed by a common audience the greatest orator, ought most certainly to be pronounced such by men of science and erudition. And though an indifferent speaker may triumph for a long time, and be esteemed altogether perfect by the vulgar, who are satisfied with his accomplishments, and know not in what he is defective; yet, whenever the true genius arises, *he* draws to him the attention of every one, and immediately appears superior to his rival.

Now, to judge by this rule, ancient eloquence, that is, the sublime and passionate, is of a much juster taste than the modern, or the argumentative and rational, and, if properly executed, will always have more command and authority over mankind. We are satisfied with our mediocrity, because we have had no experience of anything better: but

the ancients had experience of both; and upon comparison, gave the preference to that kind of which they have left us such applauded models. For, if I mistake not, our modern eloquence is of the same style or species with that which ancient critics denominated Attic eloquence, that is, calm, elegant, and subtile, which instructed the reason more than affected the passions, and never raised its tone above argument or common discourse. Such was the eloquence of Lysias among the Athenians, and of Calvus among the Romans. These were esteemed in their time; but, when compared with Demosthenes and Cicero, were eclipsed like a taper when set in the rays of a meridian sun. Those latter orators possessed the same elegance, and subtilty, and force of argument with the former; but, what rendered them chiefly admirable, was that pathetic and sublime, which, on proper occasions, they threw into their discourse, and by which they commanded the resolution of their audience.

Of this species of eloquence we have scarcely had any instance in England, at least in our public speakers. In our writers, we have had some instances which have met with great applause, and might assure our ambitious youth of equal or superior glory in attempts for the revival of ancient eloquence. Lord Bolingbroke's productions, with all their defects in argument, method, and precision, contain a force and energy which our orators scarcely ever aim at; though it is evident that such an elevated style has much better grace in a speaker than in a writer, and is assured of more prompt and more astonishing success. It is there seconded by the graces of voice and action: the movements are mutually communicated between the orator and the audience: and the very aspect of a large assembly, attentive to the discourse of one man, must inspire him with a peculiar elevation, sufficient to give a propriety to the strongest figures

and expressions. It is true, there is a great prejudice against *set speeches*; and a man cannot escape ridicule, who repeats a discourse as a schoolboy does his lesson, and takes no notice of anything that has been advanced in the course of the debate. But where is the necessity of falling into this absurdity? A public speaker must know beforehand the question under debate. He may compose all the arguments, objections, and answers, such as he thinks will be most proper for his discourse. If anything new occur, he may supply it from his own invention; nor will the difference be very apparent between his elaborate and his extemporary compositions. The mind naturally continues with the same *impetus* or *force*, which it has acquired by its motion, as a vessel, once impelled by the oars, carries on its course for some time when the original impulse is suspended.—*Essay on Eloquence*.

## 2. The Virtues of Cheerfulness and of Magnanimity.

WHOEVER has passed an evening with serious melancholy people, and has observed how suddenly the conversation was animated, and what sprightliness diffused itself over the countenance, discourse, and behaviour of every one, on the accession of a good-humoured, lively companion; such a one will easily allow, that cheerfulness carries great merit with it, and naturally conciliates the good-will of mankind. No quality, indeed, more readily communicates itself to all around; because no one has a greater propensity to display itself in jovial talk and pleasant entertainment. The flame spreads through the whole circle; and the most sullen and morose are often caught by it. That the melancholy hate the merry, even though Horace says it, I have some difficulty to allow; because I have always observed that, where the

jollity is moderate and decent, serious people are so much the more delighted, as it dissipates the gloom with which they are commonly oppressed, and gives them an unusual enjoyment.

From this influence of cheerfulness, both to communicate itself, and to engage approbation, we may perceive that there is another set of mental qualities, which, without any utility or any tendency to farther good, either of the community or of the possessor, diffuse a satisfaction on the beholders, and procure friendship and regard. Their immediate sensation to the person possessed of them is agreeable: others enter into the same humour, and catch the sentiment, by a contagion or natural sympathy: and as we cannot forbear loving whatever pleases, a kindly emotion arises towards the person who communicates so much satisfaction. He is a more animating spectacle: his presence diffuses over us more serene complacency and enjoyment: our imagination, entering into his feelings and disposition, is affected in a more agreeable manner, than if a melancholy, dejected, sullen, anxious temper were presented to us. Hence the affection and approbation which attend the former; the aversion and disgust with which we regard the latter.

Few men would envy the character which Cæsar gives of Cassius:

He loves no play,

As thou dost, Antony: he hears no music:

Seldom he smiles: and smiles in such a sort

As if he mocked himself, and scorned his spirit

That could be moved to smile at anything.

Not only such men, as Cæsar adds, are commonly dangerous, but also, having little enjoyment within themselves, they can never become agreeable to others, or contribute to

social entertainment. In all polite nations and ages, a relish for pleasure, if accompanied with temperance and decency, is esteemed a considerable merit, even in the greatest men; and becomes still more requisite in those of inferior rank and character. It is an agreeable representation, which a French writer gives of the situation of his own mind in this particular: 'Virtue I love,' says he, 'without austerity, pleasure without effeminacy, and life without fearing its end.'

Who is not struck with any signal instance of greatness of mind or dignity of character; with elevation of sentiment, disdain of slavery, and with that noble pride and spirit which arises from conscious virtue? The sublime, says Longinus, is often nothing but the echo or image of magnanimity: and where this quality appears in any one, even though a syllable be not uttered, it excites our applause and admiration; as may be observed of the famous silence of Ajax in the Odyssey, which expresses more noble disdain and resolute indignation than any language can convey.

'Were I Alexander,' said Parmenio, 'I would accept of these offers made by Darius.'—'So would I too,' replied Alexander, 'were I Parmenio.' This saying is admirable, says Longinus, from a like principle.

'Go!' cries the same hero to his soldiers, when they refused to follow him to the Indies, 'go, tell your countrymen, that you left Alexander completing the conquest of the world.' 'Alexander,' said the Prince of Condé, who always admired this passage, 'abandoned by his soldiers among barbarians not yet fully subdued, felt in himself such dignity and right of empire, that he could not believe it possible that any one would refuse to obey him. Whether in Europe or in Asia, among Greeks or Persians, all was indifferent to him: wherever he found men, he fancied he should find subjects.'

The confidant of Medea in the tragedy recommends

caution and submission ; and, enumerating all the distresses of that unfortunate heroine, asks her, what she has to support her against her numerous and implacable enemies ? 'Myself,' replies she ; 'Myself, I say, and it is enough.' Boileau justly recommends this passage as an instance of true sublime.

When Phocion, the modest and gentle Phocion, was led to execution, he turned to one of his fellow-sufferers, who was lamenting his own hard fate, 'Is it not glory enough for you,' says he, 'that you die with Phocion ?'

Place in opposition the picture which Tacitus draws of Vitellius, fallen from empire, prolonging his ignominy from a wretched love of life, delivered over to the merciless rabble ; tossed, buffeted, and kicked about ; constrained, by their holding a poniard under his chin, to raise his head, and expose himself to every contumely. What abject infamy ! what low humiliation ! Yet even here, says the historian, he discovered some symptoms of a mind not wholly degenerate. To a tribune who insulted him, he replied, 'I am still your emperor.'

We never excuse the absolute want of spirit and dignity of character, or a proper sense of what is due to one's self in society, and the common intercourse of life. This vice constitutes what we properly call meanness, when a man can submit to the basest slavery, in order to gain his ends, fawn upon those who abuse him, and degrade himself by intimacies and familiarities with undeserving inferiors. A certain degree of generous pride or self-value is so requisite, that the absence of it in the mind displeases, after the same manner as the want of a nose, eye, or any of the most material features of the face, or members of the body.—*An Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals.*

### 3. Of the Association of Ideas.

It is evident, that there is a principle of connection between the different thoughts or ideas of the mind, and that, in their appearance to the memory or imagination, they introduce each other with a certain degree of method and regularity. In our more serious thinking or discourse, this is so observable, that any particular thought, which breaks in upon the regular tract or chain of ideas, is immediately remarked and rejected. And even in our wildest and most wandering reveries, nay, in our very dreams, we shall find, if we reflect, that the imagination ran not altogether at adventures, but that there was still a connection upheld among the different ideas which succeeded each other. Were the loosest and freest conversation to be transcribed, there would immediately be observed something which connected it in all its transitions. Or where this is wanting, the person who broke the thread of discourse might still inform you, that there had secretly revolved in his mind a succession of thought, which had gradually led him from the subject of conversation. Among different languages, even when we cannot suspect the least connection or communication, it is found, that the words expressive of ideas the most compounded, do yet nearly correspond to each other; a certain proof that the simple ideas comprehended in the compound ones were bound together by some universal principle, which had an equal influence on all mankind.

Though it be too obvious to escape observation, that different ideas are connected together, I do not find that any philosopher has attempted to enumerate or class all the principles of association; a subject, however, that seems worthy of curiosity. To me there appear to be only three



principles of connection among ideas, namely, resemblance, contiguity in time or place, and cause or effect.

That these principles serve to connect ideas, will not, I believe, be much doubted. A picture naturally leads our thoughts to the original. The mention of one apartment in a building naturally introduces an inquiry or discourse with the others; and if we think of a wound, we can scarcely forbear reflecting on the pain which follows it. But that this enumeration is complete, and that there are no other principles of association except these, may be difficult to prove to the satisfaction of the reader, or even to a man's own satisfaction. All we can do, in such cases, is to run over several instances, and examine carefully the principle which binds the different thoughts to each other, never stopping till we render the principle as general as possible. The more instances we examine, and the more care we employ, the more assurance shall we acquire, that the enumeration which we form from the whole is complete and entire.—*An Enquiry concerning the Human Understanding.*

#### 4. On the Origin of Ideas.

Nothing, at first view, may seem more unbounded than the thought of man; which not only escapes all human power and authority, but is not even restrained within the limits of nature and reality. To form monsters and join incongruous shapes and appearances, costs the imagination no more trouble than to conceive the most natural and familiar objects. And while the body is confined to one planet, along which it creeps with pain and difficulty, the thought can in an instant transport us into the most distant regions of the universe, or even beyond the universe, into

the unbounded chaos, where nature is supposed to lie in total confusion. What never was seen or heard of, may yet be conceived; nor is anything beyond the power of thought, except what implies an absolute contradiction.

But though our thought seems to possess this unbounded liberty, we shall find upon a nearer examination, that it is really confined within very narrow limits, and that all this creative power of the mind amounts to no more than the faculty of compounding, transposing, augmenting, or diminishing the materials afforded us by the senses and experience. When we think of a golden mountain, we only join two consistent ideas, *gold* and *mountain*, with which we were formerly acquainted. A virtuous horse we can conceive; because, from our own feeling, we can conceive virtue; and this we may unite to the figure and shape of a horse, which is an animal familiar to us. In short, all the materials of thinking are derived either from our outward or inward sentiment: the mixture and composition of these belongs alone to the mind and will: or, to express myself in philosophical language, all our ideas or more feeble perceptions are copies of our impressions or more lively ones.

To prove this, the two following arguments will, I hope, be sufficient. *First*, When we analyze our thoughts or ideas, however compounded or sublime, we always find that they resolve themselves into such simple ideas as were copied from a precedent feeling or sentiment. Even those ideas, which at first view, seem the most wide of this origin, are found, upon a nearer scrutiny, to be derived from it. The idea of God, as meaning an infinitely intelligent, wise, and good Being, arises from reflecting on the operations of our own mind, and augmenting, without limit, those qualities of goodness and wisdom. We may prosecute this inquiry

to what length we please ; where we shall always find, that every idea which we examine is copied from a similar impression. Those who would assert, that this position is not universally true, nor without exception, have only one, and that an easy method of refuting it; by producing that idea, which, in their opinion, is not derived from this source. It will then be incumbent on us, if we would maintain our doctrine, to produce the impression or lively perception which corresponds to it.

*Secondly*, If it happens, from a defect of the organ, that a man is not susceptible of any species of sensation, we always find that he is as little susceptible of the correspondent ideas. A blind man can form no notion of colours ; a deaf man of sounds. Restore either of them that sense in which he is deficient ; by opening this new inlet for his sensations, you also open an inlet for the ideas ; and he finds no difficulty in conceiving these objects. The case is the same, if the object proper for exciting any sensation has never been applied to the organ. A Laplander or Negro has no notion of the relish of wine. And though there are few or no instances of a like deficiency in the mind, where a person has never felt, or is wholly incapable of a sentiment or passion that belongs to his species, yet we find the same observation to take place in a less degree. A man of mild manners can form no idea of inveterate revenge or cruelty ; nor can a selfish heart easily conceive the heights of friendship and generosity. It is readily allowed, that other beings may possess many senses of which we can have no conception ; because the ideas of them have never been introduced to us, in the only manner by which an idea can have access to the mind, to wit, by the actual feeling and sensation.—*Philosophical Works.*

### 5. William and the Norman Conquest.

Few princes have been more fortunate than this great monarch, or were better entitled to grandeur and prosperity, from the abilities and the vigour of mind which he displayed in all his conduct. His spirit was bold and enterprising, yet guided by prudence: his ambition, which was exorbitant, and lay little under the restraints of justice, still less under those of humanity, ever submitted to the dictates of sound policy. Born in an age when the minds of men were intractable and unacquainted with submission, he was yet able to direct them to his purposes; and partly from the ascendant of his vehement character, partly from art and dissimulation, to establish an unlimited authority. Though not insensible to generosity, he was hardened against compassion; and he seemed equally ostentatious and equally ambitious of show and parade in his clemency and in his severity. The maxims of his administration were austere; but might have been useful, had they been solely employed to preserve order in an established government: they were ill calculated for softening the rigours, which, under the most gentle management, are inseparable from conquest. His attempt against England was the last great enterprise of the kind, which, during the course of seven hundred years, has fully succeeded in Europe; and the force of his genius broke through those limits, which first the feudal institutions, then the refined policy of princes, have fixed to the several states of Christendom. Though he rendered himself infinitely odious to his English subjects, he transmitted his power to his posterity, and the throne is still filled by his descendants: a proof, that the foundations which he laid were firm and solid, and that, amidst

all his violence, while he seemed only to gratify the present passion, he had still an eye towards futurity.

Some writers have been desirous of refusing to this prince the title of Conqueror, in the sense which that term commonly bears; and on pretence, that the word is sometimes in old books applied to such as make an acquisition of territory by any means, they are willing to reject William's title, by right of war, to the crown of England. It is needless to enter into a controversy, which, by the terms of it, must necessarily degenerate into a dispute of words. It suffices to say, that the duke of Normandy's first invasion of the island was hostile; that his subsequent administration was entirely supported by arms; that in the very frame of his laws he made a distinction between the Normans and English, to the advantage of the former; that he acted in everything as absolute master over the natives, whose interests and affections he totally disregarded; and that if there was an interval when he assumed the appearance of a legal sovereign, the period was very short, and was nothing but a temporary sacrifice, which he, as has been the case with most conquerors, was obliged to make, of his inclination to his present policy. Scarce any of those revolutions, which, both in history and in common language, have always been denominated conquests, appear equally violent, or were attended with so sudden an alteration both of power and property. The Roman state, which spread its dominions over Europe, left the rights of individuals, in a great measure, untouched; and those civilized conquerors, while they made their own country the seat of empire, found, that they could draw most advantage from the subjected provinces, by securing to the natives the free enjoyment of their own laws and of their private possessions. The barbarians, who subdued the Roman empire,

though they settled in the conquered countries, yet being accustomed to a rude uncultivated life, found a part only of the land sufficient to supply all their wants; and they were not tempted to seize extensive possessions, which they knew neither how to cultivate nor enjoy. But the Normans and other foreigners, who followed the standard of William, while they made the vanquished kingdom the seat of government, were yet so far advanced in arts as to be acquainted with the advantages of a large property; and having totally subdued the natives, they pushed the rights of conquest (very extensive in the eyes of avarice and ambition, however narrow in those of reason) to the utmost extremity against them. Except the former conquest of England by the Saxons themselves, who were induced, by peculiar circumstances, to proceed even to the extermination of the natives, it would be difficult to find in all history a revolution more destructive, or attended with a more complete subjection of the ancient inhabitants. Contumely seems even to have been wantonly added to oppression; and the natives were universally reduced to such a state of meanness and poverty, that the English name became a term of reproach; and several generations elapsed before one family of Saxon pedigree was raised to any considerable honours, or could so much as attain the rank of baron of the realm. These facts are so apparent from the whole tenor of the English history, that none would have been tempted to deny or elude them, were they not heated by the controversies of faction; while one party was *absurdly* afraid of those *absurd* consequences, which they saw the other party inclined to draw from this event. But it is evident, that the present rights and privileges of the people, who are a mixture of English and Normans, can never be affected by a transaction, which passed seven

hundred years ago; and as all ancient authors, who lived nearest the time, and best knew the state of the country, unanimously speak of the Norman dominion as a conquest by war and arms, no reasonable man, from the fear of imaginary consequences, will ever be tempted to reject their concurring and undoubted testimony.—*History of England.*

**6. State of Civil Institutions at the end of the Reign of Richard the Third.**

THOSE who cast their eye on the general revolutions of society, will find, that, as almost all improvements of the human mind had reached nearly to their state of perfection about the age of Augustus, there was a sensible decline from that point or period; and men thenceforth relapsed gradually into ignorance and barbarism. The unlimited extent of the Roman Empire, and the consequent despotism of its monarchs, extinguished all emulation, debased the generous spirits of men, and depressed that noble flame, by which all the refined arts must be cherished and enlivened. The military government, which soon succeeded, rendered even the lives and properties of men insecure and precarious; and proved destructive to those vulgar and more necessary arts of agriculture, manufactures, and commerce; and in the end, to the military art and genius itself, by which alone the immense fabric of the empire could be supported. The irruption of the barbarous nations, which soon followed, overwhelmed all human knowledge, which was already far in its decline; and men sunk every age deeper into ignorance, stupidity, and superstition; till the light of ancient science and history had very nearly suffered a total extinction in all the European nations.

But there is a point of depression, as well as of exaltation, from which human affairs naturally return in a contrary direction, and beyond which they seldom pass either in their advancement or decline. The period, in which the people of Christendom were the lowest sunk in ignorance, and consequently in disorders of every kind, may justly be fixed at the eleventh century, about the age of William the Conqueror; and from that era, the sun of science, beginning to re-ascend, threw out many gleams of light, which preceded the full morning, when letters were revived in the fifteenth century. The Danes and other northern people, who had so long infested all the coasts, and even the inland parts of Europe, by their depredations, having now learned the arts of tillage and agriculture, found a certain subsistence at home, and were no longer tempted to desert their industry, in order to seek a precarious livelihood by rapine and by the plunder of their neighbours. The feudal governments also, among the more southern nations, were reduced to a kind of system; and though that strange species of civil polity was ill fitted to ensure either liberty or tranquillity, it was preferable to the universal licence and disorder, which had everywhere preceded it. But perhaps there was no event, which tended farther to the improvement of the age, than one, which has not been much remarked, the accidental finding of a copy of Justinian's Pandects, about the year 1130, in the town of Amalfi in Italy.

The ecclesiastics, who had leisure, and some inclination to study, immediately adopted with zeal, this excellent system of jurisprudence, and spread the knowledge of it throughout every part of Europe. Besides the intrinsic merit of the performance, it was recommended to them by its original connexion with the imperial city of



Rome, which, being the seat of their religion, seemed to acquire a new lustre and authority, by the diffusion of its laws over the western world. In less than ten years after the discovery of the Pandects, Vacarius, under the protection of Theobald, archbishop of Canterbury, read public lectures of civil law in the University of Oxford; and the clergy every where, by their example as well as exhortation, were the means of diffusing the highest esteem for this new science. That order of men, having large possessions to defend, was, in a manner, necessitated to turn their studies towards the law; and their properties being often endangered by the violence of the princes and barons, it became their interest to enforce the observance of general and equitable rules, from which alone they could receive protection. As they possessed all the knowledge of the age, and were alone acquainted with the habits of thinking, the practice, as well as science of the law, fell mostly into their hands: And though the close connexion, which without any necessity they formed between the canon and civil law, begat a jealousy in the laity of England, and prevented the Roman jurisprudence from becoming the municipal law of the country, as was the case in many states of Europe, a great part of it was secretly transferred into the practice of the courts of justice, and the imitation of their neighbours made the English gradually endeavour to raise their own law from its original state of rudeness and imperfection.

It is easy to see what advantages Europe must have reaped by its inheriting at once from the ancients, so complete an art, which was also so necessary for giving security to all other arts, and which, by refining, and still more, by bestowing solidity on the judgment, served as a model to farther improvements. The sensible utility

of the Roman law both to public and private interest recommended the study of it, at a time when the more exalted and speculative sciences carried no charms with them; and thus the last branch of ancient literature, which remained uncorrupted, was happily the first transmitted to the modern world. For it is remarkable, that in the decline of Roman learning, when the philosophers were universally infected with superstition and sophistry, and the poets and historians with barbarism, the lawyers, who, in other countries, are seldom models of science or politeness, were yet able, by the constant study and close imitation of their predecessors, to maintain the same good sense in their decisions and reasonings, and the same purity in their language and expression.

What bestowed an additional merit on the civil law, was the extreme imperfection of that jurisprudence, which preceded it among all the European nations, especially among the Saxons or ancient English. The absurdities which prevailed at that time in the administration of justice, may be conceived from the authentic monuments which remain of the ancient Saxon law; where a pecuniary commutation was received for every crime, where stated prices were fixed for men's lives and members, where private revenges were authorized for all injuries, where the use of the ordeal, corsnet, and afterwards of the duel, was the received method of proof, and where the judges were rustic freeholders, assembled of a sudden, and deciding a cause from one debate or altercation of the parties. Such a state of society was very little advanced beyond the rude state of nature: Violence universally prevailed, instead of general and equitable maxims: The pretended liberty of the times, was only an incapacity of submitting to government: And men, not protected by law in their lives and properties,

sought shelter, by their personal servitude and attachments under some powerful chieftain, or by voluntary combinations.

The gradual progress of improvement raised the Europeans somewhat above this uncultivated state; and affairs, in this island particularly, took early a turn, which was more favourable to justice and to liberty. Civil employments and occupations soon became honourable among the English: The situation of that people rendered not the perpetual attention to wars so necessary as among their neighbours, and all regard was not confined to the military profession: The gentry, and even the nobility, began to deem an acquaintance with the law a necessary part of education: They were less diverted than afterwards from studies of this kind by other sciences; and in the age of Henry VI, as we are told by Fortescue, there were in the inns of court about two thousand students, most of them men of honourable birth, who gave application to this branch of civil knowledge: A circumstance which proves, that a considerable progress was already made in the science of government, and which prognosticated a still greater.

One chief advantage, which resulted from the introduction and progress of the arts, was the introduction and progress of freedom; and this consequence affected men both in their *personal* and *civil* capacities.

If we consider the ancient state of Europe, we shall find, that the far greater part of the society were every where bereaved of their *personal* liberty, and lived entirely at the will of their masters. Every one, that was not noble, was a slave: The peasants were sold along with the land: The few inhabitants of cities were not in a better condition: Even the gentry themselves were subjected to a

long train of subordination under the greater barons or chief vassals of the crown; who, though seemingly placed in a high state of splendour, yet, having but a slender protection from law, were exposed to every tempest of the state, and by the precarious condition in which they lived, paid dearly for the power of oppressing and tyrannizing over their inferiors. The first incident, which broke in upon this violent system of government, was the practice, begun in Italy, and imitated in France, of erecting communities and corporations, endowed with privileges and a separate municipal government, which gave them protection against the tyranny of the barons, and which the prince himself deemed it prudent to respect. The relaxation of the feudal tenures, and an execution somewhat stricter, of the public law, bestowed an independence on vassals, which was unknown to their forefathers. And even the peasants themselves, though later than other orders of the state, made their escape from those bonds of villenage or slavery, in which they had formerly been retained.

It may appear strange, that the progress of the arts, which seems, among the Greeks and Romans, to have daily increased the number of slaves, should, in later times, have proved so general a source of liberty; but this difference in the events proceeded from a great difference in the circumstances, which attended those institutions. The ancient barons, obliged to maintain themselves continually in a military posture, and little emulous of elegance or splendour, employed not their villains as domestic servants, much less as manufacturers; but composed their retinue of free-men, whose military spirit rendered the chieftain formidable to his neighbours, and who were ready to attend him in every warlike enterprize. The villains were entirely

occupied in the cultivation of their master's land, and paid their rents either in corn and cattle and other produce of the farm, or in servile offices, which they performed about the baron's family, and upon the farms which he retained in his own possession. In proportion as agriculture improved, and money increased, it was found, that these services, though extremely burdensome to the villain, were of little advantage to the master; and that the produce of a large estate could be much more conveniently disposed of by the peasants themselves, who raised it, than by the landlord or his bailiff, who were formerly accustomed to receive it. A commutation was therefore made of rents for services, and of money-rents for those in kind; and as men, in a subsequent age, discovered, that farms were better cultivated where the farmer enjoyed a security in his possession, the practice of granting leases to the peasant began to prevail, which entirely broke the bonds of servitude, already much relaxed from the former practices. After this manner, villenage went gradually into disuse throughout the more civilized parts of Europe: The interest of the master, as well as that of the slave, concurred in this alteration. The latest laws which we find in England for enforcing or regulating this species of servitude, were enacted in the reign of Henry VII. And though the ancient statutes on this subject remain still unrepealed by parliament, it appears, that, before the end of Elizabeth, the distinction of villain and freeman was totally, though insensibly abolished, and that no person remained in the state, to whom the former laws could be applied.

Thus *personal* freedom became almost general in Europe; an advantage which paved the way for the increase of *political* or *civil* liberty, and which, even where it was not attended with this salutary effect, served to give the members of

the community some of the most considerable advantages of it.

The constitution of the English government, ever since the invasion of this island by the Saxons, may boast of this pre-eminence, that in no age the will of the monarch was ever entirely absolute and uncontrolled: but in other respects the balance of power has extremely shifted among the several orders of the state; and this fabric has experienced the same mutability that has attended all human institutions.

The ancient Saxons, like the other German nations, where each individual was inured to arms, and where the independence of men was secured by a great equality of possessions, seem to have admitted a considerable mixture of democracy into their form of government, and to have been one of the freest nations, of which there remains any account in the records of history. After this tribe was settled in England, especially after the dissolution of the Heptarchy, the great extent of the kingdom produced a great inequality in property; and the balance seems to have inclined to the side of aristocracy. The Norman conquest threw more authority into the hands of the sovereign, which, however, admitted of great control; though derived less from the general forms of the constitution, which were inaccurate and irregular, than from the independent power enjoyed by each baron in his particular district or province. The establishment of the Great Charter exalted still higher the Aristocracy, imposed regular limits on royal power, and gradually introduced some mixture of Democracy into the constitution. But even during this period, from the accession of Edward I to the death of Richard III, the condition of the commons was nowise eligible; a kind of Polish Aristocracy prevailed; and though the kings were

limited, the people were as yet far from being free. It required the authority almost absolute of the sovereigns, which took place in the subsequent period, to pull down those disorderly and licentious tyrants, who were equally averse from peace and from freedom, and to establish that regular execution of the laws, which, in a following age, enabled the people to erect a regular and equitable plan of liberty.

In each of these successive alterations, the only rule of government, which is intelligible or carries any authority with it, is the established practice of the age, and the maxims of administration, which are at that time prevalent, and universally assented to. Those who, from a pretended respect to antiquity, appeal at every turn to an original plan of the constitution, only cover their turbulent spirit and their private ambition under the appearance of venerable forms; and whatever period they pitch on for their model, they may still be carried back to a more ancient period, where they will find the measures of power entirely different, and where every circumstance, by reason of the greater barbarity of the times, will appear still less worthy of imitation. Above all, a civilized nation, like the English, who have happily established the most perfect and most accurate system of liberty that was ever found compatible with government, ought to be cautious in appealing to the practice of their ancestors, or regarding the maxims of uncultivated ages as certain rules for their present conduct. An acquaintance with the ancient periods of their government is chiefly *useful* by instructing them to cherish their present constitution, from a comparison or contrast with the condition of those distant times. And it is also *curious*, by shewing them the remote, and commonly faint and disfigured originals of the most finished and most noble

institutions, and by instructing them in the great mixture of accident, which commonly concurs with a small ingredient of wisdom and foresight, in erecting the complicated fabric of the most perfect government.—*History of England.*



## XXXVII.

### LAURENCE STERNE.

1713—1768.

LAURENCE STERNE was born, in 1713, at Clonmel in Ireland, where his father, who had served as a subaltern officer in Marlborough's wars, happened to be quartered. His brothers and sisters, with one exception, died either in infancy or in early life, and Laurence himself was of a weakly constitution. Till he was ten years old he followed with his mother the shifting quarters of his father. Then he was put to a good school at Halifax, and finally sent by an uncle to Jesus College, Cambridge, whence he took the degree of B.A. in 1736. This uncle had valuable preferment and good interest in the Diocese of York, of which Laurence's great-grandfather had been Archbishop. It was this probably that led the nephew to the clerical profession, which can scarcely have sate easily upon him. His uncle soon obtained for him the living of Sutton in the East Riding, and a prebendal stall at York. This preferment enabled him to marry (after two years' courtship) in 1741. For nearly twenty years he remained unknown to the world. Except during the period of his residence at York, he lived at the remote village of Sutton, doing the duty of that benefice as well as of a second which he held at Stillington. His friends seem chiefly to have been among the Yorkshire gentry, who commonly then lived for some part of the year in the county-town. In 1759, Lord Falconbridge gave him the living of Coxwold, a pleasant village in a valley under the Hambleton Hills, which was his home—when he was at home—for the rest of his life. In the same year he became suddenly famous by the publication of the first part of 'Tristram Shandy.' It was finished at intervals during the next six years. The

money which he made by it enabled him to live a good deal in London, where he was made a fashionable 'lion,' and to spend more than two years in France and Italy. This sojourn abroad suggested the 'Sentimental Journey,' published at the beginning of 1768, in which year he died.

Of these two exquisite works of humour, as no extracts are given from them, nothing need be said, except so far as they explain the affected style of his Sermons, from which the following passages are taken. These, it must be noticed, were preached to fashionable congregations, after he had become famous as a sentimental humourist. Thus in matter they represent an accommodation of Christian morals and religion to the requirements of an audience who expected from him laughter or the luxury of tears, and the awkwardness of this compromise appears also in the manner, which lacks the charm of his more spontaneous writing.

\*

### 1. The House of Mourning and the House of Feasting.

It is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting.

That I deny:—but let us hear the wise man's reasoning upon it,—'for that is the end of all men, and the living will lay it to his heart; sorrow is better than laughter:'—for a crack-brained order of Carthusian monks, I grant, but not for men of the world. For what purpose, do you imagine, has God made us? for the social sweets of the well-watered valleys, where He has planted us; or for the dry and dismal desert of a Sierra Morena? Are the sad accidents of life, and the uncheery hours which perpetually overtake us, are they not enough, but we must sally forth in quest of them,—believe our own hearts, and say, as our text would have us, that they are better than those of joy? Did the best of Beings send us into the world for this end,—to go weeping through it,—

to vex and shorten a life short and vexatious enough already? Do you think, my good preacher, that He who is infinitely happy can envy us our enjoyments? or that a Being so infinitely kind would grudge a mournful traveller the short rest and refreshments necessary to support his spirits through the stages of a weary pilgrimage? or that He would call him to a severe reckoning, because in his way he had hastily snatched at some little fugacious pleasures, merely to sweeten this uneasy journey of life, and reconcile him to the ruggedness of the road, and the many hard jostlings he is sure to meet with? Consider, I beseech you, what provision and accommodation the Author of our being has prepared for us, that we might not go on our way sorrowing—how many caravanseras of rest—what powers and faculties he has given us for taking it—what apt objects he has placed in our way to entertain us; some of which he has made so fair, so exquisitely fitted for this end, that they have power over us for a time, to charm away the sense of pain, to cheer up the dejected heart under poverty and sickness, and make it go and remember its miseries no more.

I will not contend at present against this rhetoric; I would choose rather for a moment to go on with the allegory, and say we are travellers, and, in the most affecting sense of that idea, that, like travellers, though upon business of the last and nearest concern to us, we may surely be allowed to amuse ourselves with the natural or artificial beauties of the country we are passing through, without reproach of forgetting the main errand we are sent upon; and if we can so order it as not to be led out of the way by the variety of prospects, edifices, and ruins which solicit us, it would be a nonsensical piece of saint-errantry to shut our eyes.

But let us not lose sight of the argument in pursuit of the simile.

Let us remember, various as our excursions are—that we have still set our faces towards Jerusalem,—that we have a place of rest and happiness, towards which we hasten, and that the way to get there is not so much to please our hearts, as to improve them in virtue;—that mirth and feasting are usually no friends to achievements of this kind—but that a season of affliction is in some sort a season of piety—not only because our sufferings are apt to put us in mind of our sins, but that, by the check and interruption which they give to our pursuits, they allow us what the hurry and bustle of the world too often deny us,—and that is a little time for reflection, which is all that most of us want to make us wiser and better men;—that at certain times it is so necessary a man's mind should be turned towards itself that, rather than want occasions, he had better purchase them at the expense of his present happiness.—He had better, as the text expresses it, *go to the house of mourning*, where he will meet with something to subdue his passions, than to the house of feasting, where the joy and gaiety of the place is likely to excite them. That whereas the entertainments and caresses of the one place expose his heart and lay it open to temptations—the sorrows of the other defend it, and as naturally shut them from it. So strange and unaccountable a creature is man! he is so framed that he cannot but pursue happiness—and yet, unless he is made sometimes miserable, how apt is he to mistake the way which can only lead him to the accomplishment of his own wishes.

This is the full force of the wise man's declaration.—*Sermons.*

## 2. The good and ill of Travelling.

THE love of variety, or curiosity of seeing new things, which is the same, or at least a sister passion to it,—seems woven into the frame of every son and daughter of Adam; we usually speak of it as one of Nature's levities, though planted within us for the solid purposes of carrying forward the mind to fresh inquiry and knowledge. Strip us of it, the mind (I fear) would doze for ever over the present page, and we should all of us rest at ease with such objects as presented themselves in the parish or province where we first drew breath.

It is to this spur, which is ever in our sides, that we owe the impatience of this desire for travelling; the passion is no way bad, but, as others are, in its mismanagement or excess;—order it rightly, the advantages are worth the pursuit;—the chief of which are—to learn the languages, the laws and customs, and understand the government and interest, of other nations;—to acquire an urbanity and confidence of behaviour, and fit the mind more easily for conversation and discourse;—to take us out of the company of our aunts and grandmothers, and from the track of nursery mistakes; and by shewing us new objects, or old ones in new lights, to reform our judgments;—by tasting perpetually the varieties of Nature, to know what *is good*,—by observing the address and arts of man, to conceive what *is sincere*; and, by seeing the difference of so many various humours and manners, to look into ourselves, and form our own.

This is some part of the cargo we might return with; but the impulse of seeing new sights, augmented with that of getting clear from all lessons both of wisdom and reproof at home,—carries our youth too early out to turn this venture

to much account; on the contrary, if the scene painted of the prodigal in his travels looks more like a copy than an original,—will it not be well if such an adventurer, with so uncompromising a setting out,—without *carle*,—without compass,—be not cast away for ever?—and may he not be said to escape well, if he return to his country only as naked as he first left it?

But you will send an able pilot with your son:—a scholar.

If wisdom can speak in no other language but Greek or Latin,—you do well;—or, if mathematics will make a man a gentleman,—or natural philosophy but teach him to make a bow,—he may be of some service in introducing your son into good societies, and supporting him in them when he has done;—but the upshot will be generally this, that, in the most pressing occasions of address,—if he is a mere man of reading, the unhappy youth will have the tutor to carry, and not the tutor to carry him.

But you will avoid this extreme; he shall be escorted by one who knows the world not merely from books,—but from his own experience;—a man who has been employed on such services, and thrice made *the Tour of Europe with success*;—

—That is, without breaking his own or his pupil's neck; for, if he is such as my eyes have seen! some broken Swiss *valet de Chambre*,—some general undertaker, who will perform the journey in so many months, *if God permit*, much knowledge will not accrue;—some profit at least;—he will learn the amount, to a halfpenny, of every stage from Calais to Rome;—he will be carried to the best inns, instructed where there is the best wine, and sup a livre cheaper than if the youth had been left to make the tour and the bargain himself.—Look at our governor, I beseech you!—see, he is an inch taller, as he relates the advantages!

—And here endeth his pride, his knowledge, and his use.

But, when your son gets abroad, he will be taken out of his hand by his society with men of rank and letters, with whom he will pass the greatest part of his time.

Let me observe, in the first place, that company which is really good is very rare, and very shy: but you have surmounted this difficulty, and procured him the best letters of recommendation to the most eminent and respectable in every capital.

And I answer, that he will obtain all by them which courtesy strictly stands obliged to pay on such occasions—but no more.

There is nothing in which we are so much deceived as in the advantages proposed from our connexions and discourse with the *literati*, &c., in foreign parts; especially if the experiment is made before we are matured by years of study.

Conversation is a traffic; and if you enter into it without some stock of knowledge to balance the account perpetually betwixt you, the trade drops at once:—and this is the reason, however it may be boasted to the contrary, why travellers have so little (especially good) conversation with natives, owing to their suspicion, or, perhaps, conviction, that there is nothing to be extracted from the conversation of young itinerants worth the trouble of their bad language, or the interruption of their visits.

The pain on these occasions is usually reciprocal: the consequence of which is that the disappointed youth seeks an easier society; and, as bad company is always ready, and ever lying in wait, the career is soon finished; and the poor prodigal returns the same object of pity with the prodigal in the Gospel.—*Sermons*.

### 3. The Length of Life.

THERE is something strange in it that life should appear so short *in the gross*,—and yet so long *in the detail*. Misery may make it so, you'll say,—but we will exclude it;—and still you'll find, though we all complain of the shortness of life, what numbers there are who seem quite overstocked with the days and hours of it, and are continually sending out into the highways and streets of the city, to compel guests to come in, and take it off their hands; to do this with ingenuity and forecast is not one of the least arts and businesses of life itself; and they who cannot succeed in it carry as many marks of distress about them as Bankruptcy herself could wear. Be as careless as we may, we shall not always have the power;—nor shall we always be in a temper to let the account run thus. When the blood is cooled, and the spirits, which have hurried us on through half our days, before we have numbered one of them, are beginning to retire,—then Wisdom will press a moment to be heard;—afflictions, or a bed of sickness, will find their hours of persuasion;—and, should they fail, there is something yet behind: Old Age will overtake us at the last, and with its trembling hand hold up the glass to us as it did to the patriarch.—*Sermons.*

### 4. Shimei.

THERE is not a character in the world which has so bad an influence upon the affairs of it as this of Shimei. Whilst power meets with honest checks, and the evils of life with honest refuge, the world will never be undone; but thou, Shimei, hast sapped at both extremes, for thou corruptest



prosperity, and 'tis thou who hast broken the heart of poverty; and so long as worthless spirits can be ambitious ones, 'tis a character we shall never want. O! it infests the court, the camp, the cabinet!—it infests the church!—go where you will, in every quarter, in every profession, you see a Shimei following the wheels of the fortunate through thick mire and clay!

Haste, Shimei! haste, or thou wilt be undone for ever! Shimei girdeth up his loins, and speedeth after him. Behold, the hand which governs everything takes the wheels from off his chariot, so that he who driveth driveth on heavily. Shimei doubles his speed, but 'tis the contrary way; he flies like the wind over a sandy desert, and the place thereof shall know it no more. Stay, Shimei! 'tis your patron—your friend—your benefactor; 'tis the man who has raised you from the dunghill. 'Tis all one to Shimei. Shimei is the barometer of every man's fortune; marks the rise and fall of it with all the variations from scorching hot to freezing cold upon his countenance, that the smile will admit of. Is a cloud upon thy affairs? See,—it hangs over Shimei's brow. Hast thou been spoken for to the king or the captain of the host without success? Look not into the court calendar; the vacancy is filled up in Shimei's face. Art thou in debt? Though not to Shimei, —no matter; the worst officer of the law shall not be more insolent.

What, then, Shimei? is the guilt of poverty so black, is it of so general a concern, that thou and all thy family must rise up as one man to reproach it? When it lost everything, did it lose the right to pity too? or did he who maketh poor as well as maketh rich strip it of its natural powers to mollify the hearts and supple the tempers of your race? Trust me, ye have much to answer for; it is this

treatment, which it has ever met with from spirits like yours, which has gradually taught the world to look upon it as the greatest of evils, and shun it as the worst disgrace; and what is it, I beseech you—what is it that man will not do to keep clear of so sore an imputation and punishment? Is it not to fly from this that he rises early—late takes rest—and eats the bread of carefulness?—that he plots, contrives, swears, lies, shuffles, puts on all shapes, tries all garments, wears them with this or that side outward, just as it favours his escape!

They who have considered our nature affirm that shame and disgrace are two of the most insupportable evils of human life: the courage and spirits of many have mastered other misfortunes, and borne themselves up against them; but the wisest and best of souls have not been a match for these; and we have many a tragical instance on record what greater evils have been run into merely to avoid this one.

Without this tax of infamy, poverty, with all the burdens it lays upon our flesh, so long as it is virtuous, could never break the spirits of a man; all its hunger, and pain, and nakedness, are nothing to it; they have some counterpoise of good; and, besides, they are directed by Providence, and must be submitted to: but these are afflictions not from the hand of God, or Nature; 'for they do come forth of the dust,' and most properly may be said 'to spring out of the ground;' and this is the reason they lay such stress upon our patience, and in the end create such a distrust of the world as makes us look up, and pray,—*'Let me fall into thy hands, O God! but let me not fall into the hands of men.'*

Agreeable to this was the advice of Eliphaz to Job in the day of his distress: *'Acquaint thyself (said he) now*

with God.' Indeed, his poverty seemed to have left him no other friends; the swords of the Sabeans had frightened them away,—all but a few; and of what kind they were, the very proverb—of *Job's comforters*—says enough.

It is an instance which gives one great concern for human nature, that a man 'who always wept for him who was in trouble—who never saw any perish for want of clothing—who never suffered the stranger to lodge in the street, but opened his door to the traveller,'—that a man of so good a character 'that he never caused the eyes of the widow to fail, or had eaten his morsel by himself alone, and the fatherless had not eaten thereof;'—that such a man, the moment he fell into poverty, should have occasion to cry out for quarter,—'Have mercy upon me, O my friends! for the hand of God has touched me.' Gentleness and humanity, one would think, would melt the hardest heart, and charm the fiercest spirit,—bind up the most violent hand, and still the most abusive tongue; but the experiment failed in a stronger instance of Him whose meat and drink it was to do us good, and in pursuit of which, whose whole life was a continued scene of kindness and of insults, for which we must go back to the same explanation with which we set out,—and that is, the scandal of poverty.

'This fellow, we know not whence he is,' was the popular cry of one part; and with those who seemed to know better, the query did not lessen the disgrace. 'Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary?'—of Mary! great God of Israel! What!—of the meanest of thy people! 'for he had not regarded the low estate of his handmaiden,'—and of the poorest, too! for she had not a lamb to offer, but was purified, as Moses directed in such a case, by the oblation of a turtle-dove.

That the Saviour of their nation could be poor, and not have where to lay his head, was a crime never to be forgiven; and though the purity of his doctrine, and the works which he had done in its support, were stronger arguments on its side than his humiliation could be against it, yet the offence still remained;—they looked for the redemption of Israel; but they would have it only in those dreams of power which filled their imagination.

Ye who weigh the worth of all things only in the goldsmith's balance, was this religion for you—a religion whose appearance was not great and splendid, but looked thin and meagre, and whose principles and promises showed more like the curses of the law than its blessings: for they called for sufferings, and promised little but persecutions.

In truth, it is not easy for tribulation or distress, for nakedness or famine, to make many converts out of pride; or reconcile a worldly heart to the scorn and reproaches which were sure to be the portion of every one who believed a mystery so discredited by the world, and so unpalatable to all its passions and pleasures.

But to bring this sermon to its proper conclusion:—

If Astrea or Justice never finally took her leave of the world till the day that poverty first became ridiculous, it is matter of consolation that the God of Justice is ever over us; that, whatever outrages the lowness of our condition may be exposed to from a mean and undiscerning world, we walk in the presence of the greatest and most generous of beings, who is infinitely removed from cruelty and straitness of mind, and all those little and illiberal passions with which we hourly insult each other.

The worst part of mankind are not always to be conquered; but if they are, 'tis the imitation of these

qualities which must do it: 'tis true, as I've shown, they may fail; but still all is not lost, for if we conquer not the world, in the very attempts to do it we shall at least conquer ourselves, and lay the foundation of our peace (where it ought to be) within our own hearts.—  
*Sermons.*

## XXXVIII.

### HORACE WALPOLE, EARL OF ORFORD.

1717-1797.

HORACE WALPOLE, the son of Sir Robert Walpole, the powerful minister of George I, was born in London in 1717, and educated at Eton, where his acquaintance with the poet Gray commenced. In 1734 he went to King's College, Cambridge, and careless of any literary distinction beyond the indulgence of his own tastes, left it without taking a degree. In 1739, after he had obtained by his father's patronage several lucrative appointments, which he retained through life, he went abroad, and travelled, for the most part in company with Gray, through France and Italy. On his return to England in 1741, he entered Parliament, and sat as member for Callington, Castle Rising, and lastly for Lynn; but though he remained in Parliament till 1768, he appears, after the personal interests attaching to his father's administration had passed away, to have been rather a spectator than an actor in politics, and seldom took any part in debate.

For many years he devoted much of his time to the building and embellishment of his Gothic villa at Strawberry Hill, where he accumulated a large collection of pictures, curiosities, and *objets de vertu*. Here also he established a private printing press, from which most of his own writings and many literary and artistic works by other authors issued. In 1791 he succeeded his nephew as Earl of Orford, but never took his seat in the House of Lords. He died in 1797, in his 80th year.

Horace Walpole's name is found in several departments of literature; to be a novelist, dramatist, historian, connoisseur was

among his aims; but in all things, and above all things, as has been justly said, he was an amateur.

Horace Walpole was the author of *The Castle of Otranto*, a very successful and popular romance,—of a tragedy—*The Mysterious Mother*, and of various pamphlets and Essays which appeared in the periodicals of the day, as well as of several important catalogues of artists and artistic works; but it is by his *Letters* that he is best known to a later generation. In them he appears as a man of the world, witty, ingenious, entertaining, and always graceful; but though he amuses us by liveliness of diction, and felicity in anecdote, his style is artificial, his sentiments are destitute of elevation and tenderness, and are for the most part frivolous, and often spiteful.

### 1. The Rebel Lords at their Trial.

I AM this moment come from the conclusion of the greatest and most melancholy scene I ever yet saw! you will easily guess it was the trials of the rebel Lords. As it was the most interesting sight, it was the most solemn and fine: a coronation is a puppet-show, and all the splendour of it, idle; but this sight at once feasted one's eyes and engaged all one's passions. It began last Monday; three-parts of Westminster-hall were inclosed with galleries, and hung with scarlet; and the whole ceremony was conducted with the most awful solemnity and decency, except in the one point of leaving the prisoners at the bar, amidst the idle curiosity of some crowd, and even with the witnesses who had sworn against them, while the Lords adjourned to their own house to consult. No part of the Royal Family was there, which was a proper regard to the unhappy men, who were become their victims. One hundred and thirty-nine Lords were present, and made a noble sight on their benches frequent and full! The Chancellor was Lord

High Steward; but though a most comely personage with a fine voice, his behaviour was mean, curiously searching for occasion to bow to the Minister that is no peer, and consequently applying to the other Ministers, in a manner, for their orders, and not even ready at the ceremonial. To the prisoners he was peevish; and instead of keeping up to the humane dignity of the law of England, whose character it is to point out favour to the criminal, he crossed them, and almost scolded at any offer they made towards defence. I had armed myself with all the resolution I could, with the thought of their crimes and of the danger past, and was assisted by the sight of the Marquis of Lothian in weepers for his son, who fell at Culloden—but the first appearance of the prisoners shocked me! their behaviour melted me! Lord Kilmarnock and Lord Cromartie are both past forty, but look younger. Lord Kilmarnock is tall and slender, with an extreme fine person: his behaviour a most just mixture between dignity and submission; if in anything to be reprehended, a little affected, and his hair too exactly dressed for a man in his situation; but when I say this, it is not to find fault with him, but to show how little fault there was to be found. Lord Cromartie is an indifferent figure, appeared much dejected, and rather sullen: he dropped a few tears the first day, and swooned as soon as he got back to his cell. For Lord Balmerino, he is the most natural brave old fellow I ever saw: the highest intrepidity, even to indifference. At the bar he behaved like a soldier and a man; in the intervals of form, with carelessness and humour. He pressed extremely to have his wife, his pretty Peggy, with him in the Tower. Lady Cromartie only sees her husband through the grate, not choosing to be shut up with him, as she thinks she can serve him better by her intercession without. When



they were to be brought from the Tower in separate coaches, there was some dispute in which the axe must go—old Balmerino cried, ‘Come, come, put it with me.’ At the bar, he plays with his fingers upon the axe, while he talks to the gentleman-gaoler; and one day somebody coming up to listen, he took the blade and held it like a fan between their faces. During the trial, a little boy was near him, but not tall enough to see; he made room for the child and placed him near himself.

When the Peers were going to vote, Lord Foley withdrew, as too well a wisher; Lord Moray, as nephew of Lord Balmerino—and Lord Stair—as, I believe, uncle to his great grandfather. Lord Windsor, very affectedly, said, ‘I am sorry I must say, guilty upon my honour.’ Lord Stamford would not answer to the name of Henry, having been christened Harry—what a great way of thinking on such an occasion! I was diverted too with old Norsa, an old Jew that kept a tavern; my brother, as Auditor of the Exchequer, has a gallery along one whole side of the court; I said, ‘I really feel for the prisoners!’ old Issachar replied, ‘Feel for them! pray, if they had succeeded, what would have become of all us?’ When my Lady Townshend heard her husband vote, she said, ‘I always knew my Lord was guilty, but I never thought he would own it upon his honour.’ Lord Balmerino said, that one of his reasons for pleading not guilty, was, that so many ladies might not be disappointed of their show.—*Letters and Correspondence.*

## 2. Letter to Sir Horace Mann.

I MUST answer for your brother a paragraph that he showed me in one of your letters: ‘Mr. W.’s letters are full of wit: don’t they adore him in England?’ Not at all—and

I don't wonder at them ; for if I have any wit in my letters, which I do not at all take for granted, it is ten to one that I have none out of my letters. A thousand people can write, that cannot talk ; and besides, you know (or I conclude so, from the little one hears stirring,) that numbers of the English have wit, who don't care to produce it. Then as to adoring : you now see only my letters, and you may be sure I take care not to write you word of any of my bad qualities, which other people must see in the gross ; and that may be a great hindrance to their adoration. Oh ! there are a thousand other reasons I could give you, why I am not the least in fashion. I came over in an ill season : it is a million to one that nobody thinks a declining old Minister's son has wit. At any time, men in opposition have always most ; but now, it would be absurd for a courtier to have even common sense. There is not a Mr. Sturt, or a Mr. Stewart, whose names begin but with the first letters of Stanhope, that has not a better chance than I, for being liked. I can assure you, even those of the same party would be fools, not to pretend to think me one. Sir Robert has showed no partiality for me ; and do you think they would commend where he does not ? even supposing they had no envy, which, by the way, I am far from saying they have not. Then, my dear child, I am the coolest man of my party, and if I am ever warm, it is by contagion ; and where violence passes for parts, what will indifference be called ? But how could you think of such a question ? I don't want money, consequently no old women pay me or my wit ; I have a very flimsy constitution, consequently the young women won't taste my wit, and it is a long while before wit makes its own way in the world, especially as I never prove it, by assuring people that I have it by me. Indeed, if I were disposed to brag, I could quote two or three half-pay officers, and an old aunt or two,

who laugh prodigiously at everything I say ; but till they are allowed judges, I will not brag of such authorities.

If you have a mind to know who is adored and has wit, there is old Churchill has as much wit as ever—except that he has lost two teeth. There are half a dozen Scotchmen who vote against the Court, and are cried up by the Opposition for wit, to keep them steady. They are forced to cry up their parts, for it would be too barefaced to commend their honesty. Then Mr. Nugent has had a great deal of wit till within this week ; but he is so busy and so witty, that even his own party grow tired of him. His plump wife, who talks of nothing else, says he entertained her all the way on the road with repeating his speeches.—*Letters and Correspondence.*

### 8. The Autobiography of Lord Herbert.

SOME years ago the following pages would have been reckoned one of the greatest presents which the learned world could have received. The life of the famous Lord Herbert of Cherbury, written by himself, would have excited the curiosity of the whole republic of letters. Perhaps a less proportion of expectation may attend this its late appearance : not that the abilities of the noble writer have fallen into disesteem ; his reign of Henry VIII. is allowed to be a masterpiece of historic biography ; but they were his speculative works, which, raising a multitude of admirers or censors from their acuteness and singularity, made Lord Herbert's name of the first importance. The many great men, who illustrated the succeeding period, have taken off some of the public attention ; for it is only a genius of the first force whose fame dilates with ages, and can buoy itself up above the indifference which steals upon mankind, as an

author becomes less and less the subject of conversation. Speculative writers, however penetrating, however sublime their talents, seldom attain the seal of universal approbation, because, of all the various abilities which Providence has bestowed on man, reasoning is not the power which has been brought to standard perfection. Poetry and eloquence have been so far perfected, that the great masters in those branches still remain unequalled; but where is that book of human argumentation, where that system of human opinions, which has not been partly confuted or exploded? Novelty itself in matters of metaphysical inquiry often proves, in effect, a confutation of antecedent novelties. Opponents raise the celebrity of the doctrines they attack: newer doctrines stifle that celebrity. This is a truth which the bigots of Lord Herbert's age would not have liked to hear; but what has happened to many other great men, has been his fate too: they who meant to wound his fame, extended it; when the cry of enthusiasts was drawn off to fresher game, his renown grew fainter. His moral character recovered its lustre, but has fewer spectators to gaze at it.

This introduction to his life may not be improper, though at first it may mislead the reader, who will hence perhaps expect from his own pen some account of a person's creed, whom a few zealots once represented as having none at all. His lordship's thorough belief and awful veneration of the Deity will clearly appear in these pages; but neither the unbeliever nor the monk will have farther satisfaction. This life of a philosopher is neither a deduction of his opinions nor a table of philosophy—I will anticipate the reader's surprise, though it shall be but in a word: to his astonishment he will find, that the History of Don Quixote was the Life of Plato.

The noble family, which gives these sheets to the world,

is above the little prejudices which make many a race defraud the public of what was designed for it by those who alone had a right to give or withhold. It is above suppressing what Lord Herbert dared to tell. Foibles, passions, perhaps some vanity, surely some wrongheadedness; these he scorned to conceal, for he sought truth, wrote on truth, was truth: he honestly told when he had missed or mistaken it. His descendants, not blind to his faults, but through them conducting the reader to his virtues, desire the world to make this candid observation with them. 'That there must have been a wonderful fund of internal virtue, of strong resolution and manly philosophy, which in an age of such mistaken and barbarous gallantry, of such absurd usages and false glory, could enable Lord Herbert to seek fame better founded, and could make him reflect that there might be a more desirable kind of glory than that of a romantic duelist.' None shut their eyes so obstinately against seeing what is ridiculous, as they who have attained a mastery in it: but that was not the case of Lord Herbert. His valour made him a hero, be the heroism in vogue what it would; his sound parts made him a philosopher. Few men, in truth, have figured so conspicuously in lights so various; and his descendants, though they cannot approve him in every walk of glory, would perhaps injure his memory, if they suffered the world to be ignorant, that he was formed to shine in every sphere, into which his impetuous temperament, or predominant reason conducted him.

As a soldier, he won the esteem of those great captains the Prince of Orange and the Constable de Montmorency; as a knight, his chivalry was drawn from the purest founts. Had he been ambitious, the beauty of his person would have carried him as far as any gentle knight can aspire to go. As a public minister, he supported the dignity of his country,

even when its prince disgraced it ; and that he was qualified to write its annals as well as to ennoble them, the history I have mentioned proves, and must make us lament that he did not complete, or that we have lost, the account he purposed to give of his embassy. These busy scenes were blended with, and terminated by, meditation and philosophic inquiries. Strip each period of its excesses and errors, and it will not be easy to trace out, or dispose the life of a man of quality into a succession of employments which would better become him. Valour and military activity in youth ; business of state in the middle age ; contemplation and labours for the information of posterity in the calmer scenes of closing life : this was Lord Herbert. . . .

Being written when Lord Herbert was past sixty, the work was probably never completed. The spelling is in general given as in the MS. but some obvious mistakes it was necessary to correct, and a few notes have been added, to point out the most remarkable persons mentioned in the text. The style is remarkably good for that age, which coming between the nervous and expressive manliness of the preceding century, and the purity of the present standard, partook of neither. His lordship's observations are new and acute ; some very shrewd ; his discourse on the Reformation very wise. To the French confessor his reply was spirited ; indeed his behaviour to Luynes, and all his conduct, gave ample evidence of his constitutional fire. But nothing is more marked than the air of veracity or persuasion which runs through the whole narrative. If he makes us wonder, and wonder makes us doubt, the charm of his ingenuous integrity dispels our hesitation. The whole relation throws singular light on the manners of the age, though the gleams are transient. In those manners nothing is more striking than the strange want of police in this country. I will not

point out instances, as I have already perhaps too much opened the contents of a book, which if it gives other readers half the pleasure it afforded me, they will own themselves extraordinarily indebted to the noble person by whose favour I am permitted to communicate to them so great a curiosity.  
—*Advertisement to 1st edition of the Autobiography of Lord Herbert of Cherbury.*

## XXXIX.

### GILBERT WHITE.

1720-1793.

GILBERT WHITE was born at Selborne, July 18, 1720. He received an excellent classical education, and became Fellow of Oriel College, Oxford, in March, 1744. Of his life nothing is known beyond what is contained in the following few words prefixed to a new edition of the *History of Selborne*:—

‘Of an unambitious temper and strongly attached to the charms of rural scenery, he early fixed his residence in his native village, where he spent the greater part of his life in literary occupations and especially in the study of Nature. Though several occasions offered of settling upon a College living, he could never persuade himself to quit the beloved spot, which was indeed a peculiarly happy situation for an observer. Here his days passed tranquil and serene, with scarcely any other vicissitudes than those of the seasons, till they closed at a mature age on June 26, 1793.’

Gilbert White’s *Natural History and Antiquities of Selborne*, his only work, is the record of his life-long observation of the habits of animals and the aspects of Nature. It derives the charm which makes it an unique book in natural history, from the freshness and vividness of its descriptions of the instincts and ways of animals, which formed for him the object of a close daily attention. He was not a systematic naturalist; yet the new species which he added to the British Fauna, among which were two quadrupeds—the harvest mouse, *mus messorius*, and the great bat, *vespertilio noctula*, sufficiently attest his skill in distinguishing animal forms. He portrays the life of birds with especial sympathy and delicacy. What he tells, he tells in a style simple and unaffected, yet of a purity and elegance which he perhaps owed to his classical training.



### 1. The Fern or Churn-owl.

ON the 12th of July I had an opportunity of contemplating the motions of the *capri-mulgus* or fern-owl, as it was playing round a large oak that swarmed with *scarabæi solstitiales* or fern-chafers. The powers of its wing were wonderful, exceeding, if possible, the various evolutions and quick turns of the swallow genus. The circumstance that pleased me most was, that I saw it distinctly more than once put out its short leg while on the wing, and by a bend of the head deliver somewhat into its mouth. If it takes any part of its prey with its foot, as I have now the greatest reason to suppose it does these chafers, I no longer wonder at the use of its middle toe, which is curiously furnished with a serrated claw.

There is no bird whose manners I have studied more. It is a wonderful and curious creature. Though sometimes it may chatter as it flies, yet in general it utters its jarring note sitting on a bough. I have for many an half-hour watched it as it sat with its under mandible quivering, and particularly this summer. It perches usually on a bare twig with its head lower than its tail. It is most punctual in beginning its song exactly at the close of day; so exactly, that I have known it strike up more than once or twice just at the report of the Portsmouth evening gun, which we can hear when the weather is still. It appears to me past all doubt that its notes are formed by organic impulse, by the powers of the part of its windpipe formed for sound, just as cats purr. As my neighbours were assembled in an hermitage on the side of a steep hill where we drink tea, one of these churn-owls came and settled on the cross of that little straw edifice and began to chatter, and continued his note for many minutes. We were all struck with wonder to find that the organs of

that little animal when put in motion gave a sensible vibration to the whole building.—*Natural History of Selborne.*

## 2. Earth-worms.

LANDS that are subject to frequent inundations are always poor; and probably, the reason may be because the worms are drowned. The most insignificant insects and reptiles are of much more consequence, and have much more influence in the economy of Nature, than the incurious are aware of; and are mighty in their effect, from their minuteness, which renders them less an object of attention; and from their numbers and fecundity. Earth-worms, though in appearance a small and despicable link in the chain of Nature, yet, if lost, would make a lamentable chasm. For to say nothing of half the birds, and some quadrupeds which are almost entirely supported by them, worms seem to be great promoters of vegetation, which would proceed but lamely without them, by boring, perforating, and loosening the soil, and rendering it pervious to rains and the fibres of plants, by drawing straws and stalks of leaves and twigs into it; and, most of all, by throwing up such infinite numbers of lumps of earth called worm-casts, which being their excrement, is a fine manure for grain and grass. Worms probably provide new soil for hills and slopes where the rain washes the earth away; and they affect slopes, probably to avoid being flooded. Gardeners and farmers express their detestation of worms; the former because they render their walks unsightly, and make them much work: and the latter because, as they think, worms eat their green corn. But these men would find that the earth without worms would soon become cold, hard-bound, and void of fermentation; and consequently sterile: and besides, in favour of worms, it should be hinted

that green corn, plants, and flowers, are not so much injured by them as by many species of *coleoptera* (scarabs), and *tipulæ* (long-legs), in their larva, or grub-state; and by unnoticed myriads of small shell-less snails, called slugs, which silently and imperceptibly make amazing havoc in the field and garden.

Worms work most in the spring; but by no means lie torpid in the dead months; are out every mild night in the winter, as any person may be convinced that will take the pains to examine his grass-plots with a candle.—*Natural History of Selborne.*

### 3. An Idiot boy at Selborne.

WE had in this village more than twenty years ago an idiot boy, whom I well remember, who, from a child, showed a strong propensity to bees; they were his food, his amusement, his sole object. And as people of this cast have seldom more than one point in view, so this lad exerted all his few faculties on this one pursuit. In the winter he dosed away his time, within his father's house, by the fire-side, in a kind of torpid state, seldom departing from the chimney-corner; but in the summer he was all alert, and in quest of his game in the fields, and on sunny banks. Honey-bees, humble-bees, and wasps, were his prey wherever he found them: he had no apprehensions from their stings, but would seize them *nudis manibus*, and at once disarm them of their weapons, and suck their bodies for the sake of their honey-bags. Sometimes he would fill his bosom between his shirt and his skin with a number of these captives: and sometimes would confine them in bottles. He was a very *merops apiaster*, or *bee-bird*; and very injurious to men that kept bees; for he would slide into their bee-gardens, and, sitting down before

the stools, would rap with his finger on the hives, and so take the bees as they came out. He has been known to overturn hives for the sake of honey, of which he was passionately fond. Where metheglin was making, he would linger round the tubs and vessels, begging a draught of what he called *bee-wine*. As he ran about he used to make a humming noise with his lips, resembling the buzzing of bees. This lad was lean and sallow, and of a cadaverous complexion: and except in his favourite pursuit, in which he was wonderfully adroit, discovered no manner of understanding.

When a tall youth, he was removed from hence to a distant village, where he died, as I understand, before he arrived at manhood.—*Natural History of Selborne*.

#### 4. The Sand Martin.

THE sand-martin, or bank-martin, is by much the least of any of the British hirundines; and, as far as we have ever seen, the smallest known hirundo; though Brisson asserts that there is one much smaller, and that is the *hirundo esculenta*.

But it is much to be regretted that it is scarce possible for any observer to be so full and exact as he could wish in reciting the circumstances attending the life and conversation of this little bird, since it is *fera natura*, at least in this part of the kingdom, disclaiming all domestic attachments, and haunting wild heaths and commons where there are large lakes; while the other species, especially the swallow and house-martin, are remarkably gentle and domesticated, and never seem to think themselves safe but under the protection of man.

Here are in this parish, in the sand-pits and banks of the

lakes of Woolmer forest, several colonies of these birds; and yet they are never seen in the village; nor do they at all frequent the cottages that are scattered about in that wild district. The only instance I ever remember where this species haunts any building is at the town of Bishop's Waltham, in this county, where many sand-martins nestle and breed in the scaffold-holes of the back-wall of William of Wykeham's stables; but then this wall stands in a very sequestered and retired enclosure, and faces upon a large and beautiful lake. And indeed this species seems so to delight in large waters, that no instance occurs of their abounding, but near vast pools or rivers; and in particular it has been remarked that they swarm in the banks of the Thames in some places below London-bridge.

It is curious to observe with what different degrees of architectonic skill Providence has endowed birds of the same genus, and so nearly correspondent in their general mode of life! for while the swallow and the house-martin discover the greatest address in raising and securely fixing crusts or shells of loam as cunabula for their young, the bank-martin terebrates a round and regular hole in the sand or earth, which is serpentine, horizontal, and about two feet deep. At the inner end of this burrow does this bird deposit, in a good degree of safety, her rude nest, consisting of fine grasses and feathers, usually goose feathers, very inartificially laid together.

Perseverance will accomplish anything; though at first one would be disinclined to believe that this weak bird, with her soft and tender bill and claws, should ever be able to bore the stubborn sand-bank without entirely disabling herself; yet with these feeble instruments have I seen a pair of them make great dispatch, and could remark how much they had scooped that day by the fresh

sand which ran down the bank, and was of a different colour from that which lay loose and bleached in the sun.

In what space of time these little artists are able to mine and finish these cavities I have never been able to discover, for reasons given above; but it would be a matter worthy of observation, where it falls in the way of any naturalist to make his remarks. This I have often taken notice of, that several holes of different depths are left unfinished at the end of summer. To imagine that these beginnings were intentionally made in order to be in the greater forwardness for next spring is allowing perhaps too much foresight and *rerum prudentia* to a simple bird. May not the cause of these *latebrae* being left unfinished arise from their meeting in those places with strata too harsh, hard, and solid, for their purpose, which they relinquish, and go to a fresh spot that works more freely? Or may they not in other places fall in with a soil as much too loose and mouldering, liable to flounder, and threatening to overwhelm them and their labours?

One thing is remarkable—that, after some years, the old holes are forsaken and new ones bored; perhaps because the old habitations grow foul and fetid from long use, or because they may so abound with fleas as to become untenable. This species of swallow moreover is strangely annoyed with fleas; and we have seen fleas, bed-fleas (*pulex irritans*), swarming at the mouths of these holes, like bees on the stools of their hives.

The following circumstance should by no means be omitted—that these birds do not make use of their caverns by way of hybernacula, as might be expected; since banks so perforated have been dug out with care in the winter, when nothing was found but empty nests.

The sand-martin arrives much about the same time with the swallow, and lays, as she does, from four to six white eggs. But as this species is cryptogame, carrying on the business of nidification, incubation, and the support of its young in the dark, it would not be so easy to ascertain the time of breeding, were it not for the coming forth of the broods, which appear much about the time, or rather somewhat earlier than those of the swallow. The nestlings are supported in common, like those of their congeners, with gnats and other small insects; and sometimes they are fed with *libellulæ* (dragon-flies) almost as long as themselves. In the last week in June we have seen a row of these sitting on a rail near a great pool as perchers, and so young and helpless, as easily to be taken by hand; but whether the dams ever feed them on the wing, as swallows and house-martins do, we have never yet been able to determine; nor do we know whether they pursue and attack birds of prey.

When they happen to breed near hedges and enclosures, they are dispossessed of their breeding holes by the house-sparrow, which is on the same account a fell adversary to house-martins.

These hirundines are no songsters, but rather mute, making only a little harsh noise when a person approaches their nests. They seem not to be of a sociable turn, never with us congregating with their congeners in the autumn. Undoubtedly they breed a second time, like the house-martin and swallow; and withdraw about Michaelmas.

Though in some particular districts they may happen to abound, yet in the whole, in the south of England at least, is this much the rarest species. For there are few towns or large villages but what abound with house-martins; few churches, towers, or steeples, but what are haunted by some

swifts; scarce a hamlet or single cottage-chimney that has not its swallow; while the bank-martins, scattered here and there, live a sequestered life among some abrupt sand-hills, and in the banks of some few rivers.

These birds have a peculiar manner of flying; flitting about with odd jerks, and vacillations, not unlike the motions of a butterfly. Doubtless the flight of all hirundines is influenced by, and adapted to, the peculiar sort of insects which furnish their food. Hence it would be worth inquiry to examine what particular genus of insects affords the principal food of each respective species of swallow.

Notwithstanding what has been advanced above, some few sand-martins, I see, haunt the skirts of London, frequenting the dirty pools in Saint George's Fields, and about Whitechapel. The question is where these build, since there are no banks or bold shores in that neighbourhood; perhaps they nestle in the scaffold-holes of some old or new deserted building. They dip and wash as they fly sometimes, like the house-martin and swallow.

Sand-martins differ from their congeners in the diminutiveness of their size, and in their colour, which is what is usually called a mouse-colour. Near Valencia, in Spain, they are taken, says Willughby, and sold in the markets, for the table; and are called by the country people, probably from their desultory jerking manner of flight, *Papilion de Montagna*.—*Natural History of Selborne*.

## 5. Instinct.

THEY who write on natural history cannot too frequently advert to instinct, that wonderful limited faculty, which, in some instances, rises the brute creation, as it were, above reason, and in others leaves them so far below it. Philo-



sophers have denied instinct to be that secret influence by which every species is impelled naturally to pursue, at all times, the same way or track, without any teaching or example; whereas reason, without instruction, would often vary and do that by many methods which instinct effects by one alone. Now this maxim must be taken in a qualified sense; for there are instances in which instinct does vary and conform to the circumstances of place and convenience.

It has been remarked that every species of bird has a mode of nidification peculiar to itself, so that a school-boy would at once pronounce on the sort of nest before him. This is the case among fields and woods and wilds; but, in the villages round London, where mosses and gossamer, and cotton from vegetables, are hardly to be found, the nest of the chaffinch has not that elegant finished appearance, nor is it so beautifully studded with lichens, as in a more rural district; and the wren is obliged to construct its house with straws and dry grasses, which do not give it that rotundity and compactness so remarkable in the edifices of that little architect. Again, the regular nest of the house-martin is hemispheric; but where a rafter, or a joist, or a cornice, may happen to stand in the way, the nest is so contrived as to conform to the obstruction, and becomes flat, or compressed.

In the following instances instinct is perfectly uniform and consistent. There are three creatures, the squirrel, the field-mouse, and the bird called the nut-hatch (*sitta Europaea*), which live much on hazel-nuts; and yet they open them each in a different way. The first, after rasping off the small end, splits the shell in two with his long fore-teeth, as a man does with his knife; the second nibbles a hole with his teeth, so regular as if drilled with a wimble, and yet so small that one would wonder how the kernel can

be extracted through it; while the last picks an irregular ragged hole with its bill: but as this artist has no paws to hold the nut firm while he pierces it, like an adroit workman, he fixes it, as it were, in a vice, in some cleft of a tree, or in some crevice; when, standing over it, he perforates the stubborn shell. We have often placed nuts in the chink of a gate-post where nut-hatches have been known to haunt, and have always found that those birds have readily penetrated them. While at work they make a rapping noise that may be heard at a considerable distance.—*Natural History of Selborne.*

#### 6. The Motions of Birds.

A good ornithologist should be able to distinguish birds by their air as well as by their colours and shape; on the ground as well as on the wing; and in the bush as well as in the hand. For, though it must not be said that every species of birds has a manner peculiar to itself, yet there is somewhat in most *genera* at least, that at first sight discriminates them, and enables a judicious observer to pronounce upon them with some certainty. Put a bird in motion

—Et verâ incensu patuit—

Thus kites and buzzards sail round in circles with wings expanded and motionless; and it is from their gliding manner that the former are still called in the north of England gleads, from the Saxon verb glidan, to glide. The kestrel, or windhover, has a peculiar mode of hanging in the air in one place, his wings all the while being briskly agitated. Hen-harriers fly low over the heaths or fields of corn, and beat the ground regularly like a pointer or setting-dog. Owls move in a buoyant manner, as if lighter than the air;

they seem to want ballast. There is a peculiarity belonging to ravens that must draw the attention even of the most incurious—they spend all their leisure time in striking and cuffing each other on the wing in a kind of playful skirmish; and, when they move from one place to another, frequently turn on their backs with a loud croak, and seem to be falling to the ground. When this odd gesture betides them, they are scratching themselves with one foot, and thus lose the centre of gravity. Rooks sometimes dive and tumble in a frolicsome manner; crows and daws swagger in their walk; wood-peckers fly *volatu undoso*, opening and closing their wings at every stroke, and so are always rising or falling in curves. All of this genus use their tails, which incline downward, as a support while they run up trees. Parrots, like all other hooked-clawed birds, walk awkwardly, and make use of their bill as a third foot, climbing and descending with ridiculous caution. All the *gallinae* parade and walk gracefully, and run nimbly; but fly with difficulty, with an impetuous whirring, and in a straight line. Magpies and jays flutter with powerless wings, and make no dispatch; herons seem encumbered with too much sail for their light bodies, but these vast hollow wings are necessary, in carrying burdens, such as large fishes and the like; pigeons, and particularly the sort called smiters, have a way of clashing their wings the one against the other over their backs with a loud snap; another variety, called tumblers, turn themselves over in the air. Some birds have movements peculiar to the season of love: thus ringdoves, though strong and rapid at other times, yet in the spring hang about on the wing in a toying and playful manner; thus the cock-sniipe, while breeding, forgetting his former flight, fans the air like the windhover; and the green-finch in particular, exhibits such languishing

and *faultering* gestures as to appear like a wounded and dying bird; the king-fisher darts along like an arrow; fern-owls, or goat-suckers, glance in the dusk over the tops of trees like a meteor; starlings, as it were, swim along, while missel-thrushes use a wild and desultory flight; swallows sweep over the surface of the ground and water, and distinguish themselves by rapid turns and quick evolutions; swifts dash round in circles; and the bank-martin moves with frequent vacillations like a butterfly. Most of the small birds fly by jerks, rising and falling as they advance. Most small birds hop; but wagtails and larks walk, moving their legs alternately. Skylarks rise and fall perpendicularly as they sing; woodlarks hang poised in the air; and titlarks rise and fall in large curves, singing in their descent. The white-throat uses odd jerks and gesticulations over the tops of hedges and bushes. All the duck kind waddle; divers and auks walk as if fettered, and stand erect on their tails: these are the *compedes* of Linnæus. Geese and cranes, and most wild fowls, move in figured flights, often changing their position. The secondary *remiges* of Tringæ, wild-ducks, and some others, are very long, and give their wings, when in motion, an hooked appearance. Dabchicks, moor-hens, and coots, fly erect, with their legs hanging down, and hardly make any dispatch; the reason is plain, their wings are placed too forward out of the true centre of gravity; as the legs of auks and divers are situated too backward.---*Natural History of Selborne.*

## XL.

### ADAM SMITH.

1723—1790.

ADAM SMITH was born at Kirkaldy in 1723, and received his early education in the grammar school of that place. In 1737 he was sent to the University of Glasgow, where he remained for three years, and then entered Balliol College, Oxford, as Exhibitioner on Snell's foundation. He appears to have resided at Oxford for about seven years, and is said to have there commenced the study of those moral and political sciences of which he became so great a master. He left Oxford in 1747, and resided at Kirkaldy and Edinburgh until, in 1751, he was elected Professor of Logic in the University of Glasgow. In 1752 he was further promoted to the chair of Moral Philosophy, which he filled for many years. It was during this time, in 1759, that he published his *Theory of the Moral Sentiments*.

In 1763 he resigned his professorship, and travelled for more than two years on the continent as tutor to the Duke of Buccleuch.

On his return in 1766, he again settled in Kirkaldy, and was for ten years occupied in the production of his great work, the *Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, which appeared in 1776.

He survived its publication for fifteen years, and had the satisfaction of witnessing its effect in the commencement of that peaceful revolution of opinion, which, by reversing the policy of restriction and isolation, has been productive of such signal blessings to the nations of Europe. He died in Edinburgh in 1790.

Adam Smith is a great master of lucid and graceful exposition,

in which, though the literary effect is excellent, the practical aim is never sacrificed to the literary effect. His language is pervaded by the philosophic calmness and the kindness of his mind. These are the characteristics alike of his writings as a moral philosopher and as a political economist. These qualities had a great influence in diffusing the sound doctrines of political economy with which his name is identified.

### 1. The comforts of life owing to Co-operation and the Division of Labour.

It is the great multiplication of the productions of all the different arts, in consequence of the division of labour, which occasions, in a well-governed society, that universal opulence which extends itself to the lowest ranks of the people. Every workman has a great quantity of his own work to dispose of, beyond what he himself has occasion for; and, every other workman being exactly in the same situation, he is enabled to exchange a great quantity of his own goods for a great quantity, or, what comes to the same thing, for the price of a great quantity of theirs. He supplies them abundantly with what they have occasion for, and they accommodate him as amply with what he has occasion for, and a general plenty diffuses itself through all the different ranks of the society.

Observe the accommodation of the most common artificer or day-labourer in a civilised and thriving country, and you will perceive, that the number of people of whose industry a part, though but a small part, has been employed in procuring him this accommodation, exceeds all computation. The woollen coat, for example, which covers the day-labourer, as coarse and rough as it may appear, is the produce of the joint labour of a great multitude of workmen. The shepherd, the sorter of the wool, the woolcomber

or carder, the dyer, the scribbler, the spinner, the weaver, the fuller, the dresser, with many others, must all join their different arts in order to complete even this homely production. How many merchants and carriers, besides, must have been employed in transporting the materials from some of those workmen to others, who often live in a very distant part of the country! How much commerce and navigation, in particular, how many shipbuilders, sailors, sailmakers, ropemakers, must have been employed, in order to bring together the different drugs made use of by the dyer, which often come from the remotest corners of the world! What a variety of labour, too, is necessary in order to produce the tools of the meanest of those workmen! To say nothing of such complicated machines as the ship of the sailor, the mill of the fuller, or even the loom of the weaver, let us consider, only, what a variety of labour is requisite, in order to form that very simple machine the shears, with which the shepherd clips the wool. The miner, the builder of the furnace for smelting the ore, the feller of the timber, the burner of the charcoal, to be made use of in the smelting-house, the brickmaker, the bricklayer, the workmen who attend the furnace, the millwright, the forger, the smith, must all of them join their different arts in order to produce them. Were we to examine, in the same manner, all the different parts of his dress and household furniture, the coarse linen shirt which he wears next his skin, the shoes which cover his feet, the bed which he lies on, and all the different parts which compose it, the kitchen-grate at which he prepares his victuals, the coals which he makes use of for that purpose, dug from the bowels of the earth, and brought to him perhaps by a long sea and a long land carriage, all the other utensils of his kitchen, all the furniture of his table, the knives

and forks, the earthen or pewter plates upon which he serves up and divides his victuals, the different hands employed in preparing his bread and his beer, the glass window which lets in the heat and the light, and keeps out the wind and the rain, with all the knowledge and art requisite for preparing that beautiful and happy invention, without which these northern parts of the world could scarce have afforded a very comfortable habitation, together with the tools of all the different workmen employed in producing those different conveniences; if we examine, I say, all these things, and consider what a variety of labour is employed about each of them, we shall be sensible that, without the assistance and co-operation of many thousands, the very meanest person in a civilised country could not be provided, even according to, what we very falsely imagine, the easy and simple manner in which he is commonly accommodated. Compared, indeed, with the more extravagant luxury of the great, his accommodation must no doubt appear extremely simple and easy; and yet it may be true, perhaps, that the accommodation of an European prince does not always so much exceed that of an industrious and frugal peasant, as the accommodation of the latter exceeds that of many an African king, the absolute master of the lives and liberties of ten thousand naked savages.—*An Enquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations.*

## **2. Expenditure which adds to the Wealth of a Nation.**

As frugality increases, and prodigality diminishes the public capital, so the conduct of those whose expense just equals their revenue, without either accumulating or encroaching, neither increases nor diminishes it. Some modes



of expense, however, seem to contribute more to the growth of public opulence than others.

The revenue of an individual may be spent, either in things which are consumed immediately, and in which one day's expense can neither alleviate nor support that of another; or it may be spent in things more durable, which can therefore be accumulated, and in which every day's expense may, as he chooses, either alleviate or support and heighten the effect of that of the following day. A man of fortune, for example, may either spend his revenue in a profuse and sumptuous table, and in maintaining a great number of menial servants, and a multitude of dogs and horses; or, contenting himself with a frugal table and few attendants, he may lay out the greater part of it in adorning his house or his country villa, in useful or ornamental buildings, in useful or ornamental furniture, in collecting books, statues, pictures; or in things more frivolous—jewels, baubles, ingenious trinkets of different kinds; or, what is most trifling of all, in amassing a great wardrobe of fine clothes, like the favourite and minister of a great prince who died a few years ago. Were two men of equal fortune to spend their revenue, the one chiefly in the one way, the other in the other, the magnificence of the person whose expense had been chiefly in durable commodities, would be continually increasing; every day's expense contributing something to support and heighten the effect of that of the following day; that of the other, on the contrary, would be no greater at the end of the period than at the beginning. The former, too, would at the end of the period be the richer man of the two; he would have a stock of goods of some kind or other, which, though it might not be worth all that it cost, would always be worth something. No trace or vestige of the expense of the latter would remain, and the effects of ten or twenty years' pro-

fusion would be as completely annihilated as if they had never existed.

As the one mode of expense is more favourable than the other to the opulence of an individual, so is it likewise to that of a nation. The houses, the furniture, the clothing of the rich, in a little time, become useful to the inferior and middling ranks of people. They are able to purchase them when their superiors grow weary of them; and the general accommodation of the whole people is thus gradually improved, when this mode of expense becomes universal among men of fortune. In countries which have long been rich, you will frequently find the inferior ranks of people in possession both of houses and furniture perfectly good and entire, but of which neither the one could have been built, nor the other have been made for their use. What was formerly a seat of the family of Seymour, is now an inn upon the Bath-road. The marriage-bed of James the First of Great Britain, which his queen brought with her from Denmark as a present fit for a sovereign to make to a sovereign, was, a few years ago, the ornament of an ale-house at Dunfermline. In some ancient cities, which either have been long stationary or have gone somewhat to decay, you will sometimes scarce find a single house which could have been built for its present inhabitants. If you go into those houses, too, you will frequently find many excellent, though antiquated pieces of furniture, which are still very fit for use, and which could as little have been made for them. Noble palaces, magnificent villas, great collections of books, statues, pictures, and other curiosities, are frequently both an ornament and an honour not only to the neighbourhood, but to the whole country to which they belong. Versailles is an ornament and an honour to France, Stowe and Wilton to England. Italy still continues to command some sort of

reverence by the number of monuments of this kind which it possesses, though the wealth which produced them has decayed, and though the genius which planned them seems to be extinguished, perhaps from not having the same employment.

The expense too, which is laid out in durable commodities, is favourable, not only to accumulation, but to frugality. If a person should at any time exceed in it, he can easily reform without exposing himself to the censure of the public. To reduce very much the number of his servants, to reform his table from great profusion to great frugality, to lay down his equipage after he has once set it up, are changes which cannot escape the observation of his neighbours, and which are supposed to imply some acknowledgment of preceding bad conduct. Few, therefore, of those who have once been so unfortunate as to launch out too far into this sort of expense, have afterwards the courage to reform, till ruin and bankruptcy oblige them. But if a person has, at any time, been at too great an expense in building, in furniture, in books or pictures, no imprudence can be inferred from his changing his conduct. These are things in which further expense is frequently rendered unnecessary by former expense; and when a person stops short, he appears to do so, not because he has exceeded his fortune, but because he has satisfied his fancy.

The expense, besides, that is laid out in durable commodities, gives maintenance, commonly, to a greater number of people than that which is employed in the most profuse hospitality. Of two or three hundredweight of provisions, which may sometimes be served up at a great festival, one-half, perhaps, is thrown to the dunghill, and there is always a great deal wasted and abused. But if the expense of this entertainment had been employed in setting to work masons,

carpenters, upholsterers, mechanics, &c., a quantity of provisions, of equal value, would have been distributed among a still greater number of people, who would have bought them in pennyworths and pound weights, and not have lost or thrown away a single ounce of them. In the one way, besides, this expense maintains productive, in the other unproductive hands. In the one way, therefore, it increases, in the other it does not increase, the exchangeable value of the annual produce of the land and labour of the country.—*The Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations.*

### 3. Of the Different Employment of Capitals.

A PARTICULAR COUNTRY, in the same manner as a particular person, may frequently not have capital sufficient both to improve and cultivate all its lands, to manufacture and prepare their whole rude produce for immediate use and consumption, and to transport the surplus part either of the rude or manufactured produce to those distant markets where it can be exchanged for something for which there is a demand at home. The inhabitants of many different parts of Great Britain have not capital sufficient to improve and cultivate all their lands. The wool of the southern counties of Scotland is, a great part of it, after a long land carriage through very bad roads, manufactured in Yorkshire, for want of a capital to manufacture it at home. There are many little manufacturing towns in Great Britain, of which the inhabitants have not capital sufficient to transport the produce of their own industry to those distant markets where there is demand and consumption for it. If there are any merchants among them, they are properly only the agents of wealthier merchants who reside in some of the greater commercial cities.

When the capital of any country is not sufficient for all those three purposes, in proportion as a greater share of it is employed in agriculture, the greater will be the quantity of productive labour which it puts into motion within the country, as will likewise be the value which its employment adds to the annual produce of the land and labour of the society. After agriculture, the capital employed in manufactures puts into motion the greatest quantity of productive labour, and adds the greatest value to the annual produce. That which is employed in the trade of exportation has the least effect of any of the three.

The country, indeed, which has not capital sufficient for all those three purposes has not arrived at that degree of opulence for which it seems naturally destined. To attempt, however, prematurely and with an insufficient capital, to do all the three, is certainly not the shortest way for a society, no more than it would be for an individual, to acquire a sufficient one. The capital of all the individuals of a nation has its limits in the same manner as that of a single individual, and is capable of executing only certain purposes. The capital of all the individuals of a nation is increased in the same manner as that of a single individual, by their continually accumulating and adding to it whatever they save out of their revenue. It is likely to increase the fastest, therefore, when it is employed in the way that affords the greatest revenue to all the inhabitants of the country, as they will thus be enabled to make the greatest savings. But the revenue of all the inhabitants of the country is necessarily in proportion to the value of the annual produce of their land and labour.

It has been the principal cause of the rapid progress of our American colonies towards wealth and greatness, that almost their whole capitals have hitherto been employed in

agriculture. They have no manufactures, those household and coarser manufactures excepted which necessarily accompany the progress of agriculture, and which are the work of the women and children in every private family. The greater part both of the exportation and coasting trade of America is carried on by the capitals of merchants who reside in Great Britain. Even the stores and warehouses from which goods are retailed in some provinces, particularly in Virginia and Maryland, belong many of them to merchants who reside in the mother country, and afford one of the few instances of the retail trade of a society being carried on by the capitals of those who are not resident members of it. Were the Americans, either by combination or by any other sort of violence, to stop the importation of European manufactures, and, by thus giving a monopoly to such of their own countrymen as could manufacture the like goods, divert any considerable part of their capital into this employment, they would retard instead of accelerating the further increase in the value of their annual produce, and would obstruct instead of promoting the progress of their country towards real wealth and greatness. This would be still more the case were they to attempt, in the same manner, to monopolize to themselves their whole exportation trade.

This course of human prosperity, indeed, seems scarce ever to have been of so long continuance as to enable any great country to acquire capital sufficient for all those ~~three~~ purposes; unless, perhaps, we give credit to the wonderful accounts of the wealth and cultivation of China, of those of ancient Egypt, and of the ancient state of Hindostan. Even those three countries, the wealthiest, according to all accounts, that ever were in the world, are chiefly renowned for their superiority in agriculture and manufactures. They do not appear to have been eminent for foreign trade. The

ancient Egyptians had a superstitious antipathy to the sea ; a superstition nearly of the same kind prevails among the Indians ; and the Chinese have never excelled in foreign commerce. The greater part of the surplus produce of all those three countries seems to have been always exported by foreigners, who gave in exchange for it something else for which they found a demand there, frequently gold and silver.—*An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations.*

#### 4. The Equality of Human Lots.

THE great source of both the misery and disorders of human life, seems to arise from over-rating the difference between one permanent situation and another. Avarice over-rates the difference between poverty and riches : ambition, that between a private and a public station : vain-glory, that between obscurity and extensive reputation. The person under the influence of any of those extravagant passions, is not only miserable in his actual situation, but is often disposed to disturb the peace of society, in order to arrive at that which he so foolishly admires. The slightest observation, however, might satisfy him, that, in all the ordinary situations of human life, a well-disposed mind may be equally calm, equally cheerful, and equally contented. Some of those situations may, no doubt, deserve to be preferred to others : but none of them can deserve to be pursued with that passionate ardour which drives us to violate the rules either of prudence or of justice : or to corrupt the future tranquillity of our minds, either by shame from the remembrance of our own folly, or by remorse from the horror of our own injustice. Wherever prudence does not direct, wherever justice does not permit, the attempt

to change our situation, the man who does attempt it, plays at the most unequal of all games of hazard, and stakes every thing against scarce any thing. What the favourite of the King of Epirus said to his master, may be applied to men in all the ordinary situations of human life. When the king had recounted to him, in their proper order, all the conquests which he proposed to make, and had come to the last of them; And what does your majesty propose to do then? said the favourite:—I propose then, said the king, to enjoy myself with my friends, and endeavour to be good company over a bottle.—And what hinders your majesty from doing so now? replied the favourite. In the most glittering and exalted situation that our idle fancy can hold out to us, the pleasures from which we propose to derive our real happiness, are almost always the same with those which, in our actual, though humble station, we have at all times at hand, and in our power. Except the frivolous pleasures of vanity and superiority, we may find, in the most humble station, where there is only personal liberty, every other which the most exalted can afford; and the pleasures of vanity and superiority are seldom consistent with perfect tranquillity, the principle and foundation of all real and satisfactory enjoyment. Neither is it always certain that, in the splendid situation which we aim at, those real and satisfactory pleasures can be enjoyed with the same security as in the humble one which we are so very eager to abandon. Examine the records of history, recollect what has happened within the circle of your own experience, consider with attention what has been the conduct of almost all the greatly unfortunate, either in private or public life, whom you may have either read of, or heard of, or remember; and you will find that the misfortunes of by far



the greater part of them have arisen from their not knowing when they were well, when it was proper for them to sit still and to be contented. The inscription upon the tombstone of the man who had endeavoured to mend a tolerable constitution by taking physic; *'I was well; I wished to be better; here I am;'* may generally be applied with great justness to the distress of disappointed avarice and ambition.

It may be thought a singular, but I believe it to be a just, observation, that, in the misfortunes which admit of some remedy, the greater part of men do not either so readily or so universally recover their natural and usual tranquillity, as in those which plainly admit of none. In misfortunes of the latter kind, it is chiefly in what may be called the paroxysm, or in the first attack, that we can discover any sensible difference between the sentiments and behaviour of the wise and those of the weak man. In the end, Time, the great and universal comforter, gradually composes the weak man to the same degree of tranquillity with a regard to his own dignity, which manhood teaches the wise man to assume in the beginning. The case of the man with the wooden leg is an obvious example of this. In the irreparable misfortunes occasioned by the death of children, or of friends and relations, even a wise man may for some time indulge himself in some degree of moderated sorrow. An affectionate, but weak woman, is often, upon such occasions, almost perfectly distracted. Time, however, in a longer or shorter period, never fails to compose the weakest woman to the same degree of tranquillity as the strongest man. In all the irreparable calamities which affect himself immediately and directly, a wise man endeavours, from the beginning, to anticipate and to enjoy before-hand, that tranquillity which he foresees the course of a few

months, or a few years, will certainly restore to him in the end.

In the misfortunes for which the nature of things admits, or seems to admit, of a remedy, but in which the means of applying that remedy are not within the reach of the sufferer, his vain and fruitless attempts to restore himself to his former situation, his continual anxiety for their success, his repeated disappointments upon their miscarriage, are what chiefly hinder him from resuming his natural tranquillity, and frequently render miserable, during the whole of his life, a man to whom a greater misfortune, but which plainly admitted of no remedy, would not have given a fortnight's disturbance.—*The Theory of the Moral Sentiments.*

#### 5. The Exactness of the Rules of Justice.

THE general rules of almost all the virtues, the general rules which determine what are the offices of prudence, of charity, of generosity, of gratitude, of friendship, are in many respects loose and inaccurate, admit of many exceptions, and require so many modifications, that it is scarce possible to regulate our conduct entirely by a regard to them. The common proverbial maxims of prudence, being founded in universal experience, are perhaps the best general rules which can be given about it. To affect, however, a very strict and literal adherence to them would evidently be the most absurd and ridiculous pedantry. Of all the virtues I have just now mentioned, gratitude is that, perhaps, of which the rules are the most precise, and admit of the fewest exceptions. That as soon as we can we should make a return of equal, and if possible of superior, value to the services we have received, would seem to be a pretty plain rule, and one which admitted of scarce any excep-

tions. Upon the most superficial examination, however, this rule will appear to be in the highest degree loose and inaccurate, and to admit of ten thousand exceptions. If your benefactor attended you in your sickness, ought you to attend him in his? or can you fulfil the obligation of gratitude, by making a return of a different kind? If you ought to attend him, how long ought you to attend him? The same time which he attended you, or longer, and how much longer? If your friend lent you money in your distress, ought you to lend him money in his? How much ought you to lend him? When ought you to lend him? Now, or to-morrow, or next month? And for how long a time? It is evident, that no general rule can be laid down, by which a precise answer can, in all cases, be given to any of these questions. The difference between his character and yours, between his circumstances and yours, may be such, that you may be perfectly grateful, and justly refuse to lend him a half-penny : and, on the contrary, you may be willing to lend, or even to give him ten times the sum which he lent you, and yet justly be accused of the blackest ingratitude, and of not having fulfilled the hundredth part of the obligation you lie under. As the duties of gratitude, however, are perhaps the most sacred of all those which the beneficent virtues prescribe to us, so the general rules which determine them are, as I said before, the most accurate. Those which ascertain the actions required by friendship, humanity, hospitality, generosity, are still more vague and indeterminate.

There is, however, one virtue of which the general rules determine with the greatest exactness every external action which it requires. This virtue is justice. The rules of justice are accurate in the highest degree, and admit of no exceptions or modifications, but such as may be ascertained

as accurately as the rules themselves, and which generally, indeed, flow from the very same principles with them. If I owe a man ten pounds, justice requires that I should precisely pay him ten pounds, either at the time agreed upon, or when he demands it. What I ought to perform, how much I ought to perform, when and where I ought to perform it, the whole nature and circumstances of the action prescribed, are all of them precisely fixed and determined. Though it may be awkward and pedantic, therefore, to affect too strict an adherence to the common rules of prudence or generosity, there is no pedantry in sticking fast by the rules of justice. On the contrary, the most sacred regard is due to them; and the actions which this virtue requires are never so properly performed, as when the chief motive for performing them is a reverential and religious regard to those general rules which require them. In the practice of the other virtues, our conduct should rather be directed by a certain idea of propriety, by a certain taste for a particular tenor of conduct, than by any regard to a precise maxim or rule; and we should consider the end and foundation of the rule, more than the rule itself. But it is otherwise with regard to justice: the man who in that refines the least, and adheres with the most obstinate steadfastness to the general rules themselves, is the most commendable; and the most to be depended upon. Though the end of the rules of justice be, to hinder us from hurting our neighbour, it may frequently be a crime to violate them, though we could pretend with some pretext of reason, that this particular violation could do no hurt. A man often becomes a villain the moment he begins, even in his own heart, to chicaner in this manner. The moment he thinks of departing from the most staunch and positive adherence to what those inviolable precepts pre-

scribe to him, he is no longer to be trusted, and no man can say what degree of guilt he may not arrive at. The thief imagines he does no evil, when he steals from the rich, what he supposes they may easily want, and what possibly they may never even know has been stolen from them. . . . When once we begin to give way to such refinements, there is no enormity so gross of which we may not be capable.—*The Theory of the Moral Sentiments.*

## XLI.

### SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.

1723—1792.

THE biography of Sir Joshua Reynolds is contained almost entirely in the history of his paintings, like that of many other great artists. He was the son of a Devonshire clergyman, and was born at Plympton, in Devonshire in 1723; he shewed from his earliest years a strong inclination to express his ideas in lines and colours, and his father moderately and sensibly encouraged him. It is told of him that at eight years of age he had mastered the rules contained in the 'Jesuits' Perspective.' The perusal of Richardson's Treatise on Painting decided the youthful artist to devote his life to the pursuit which had thus early fascinated him. At seventeen, he became the pupil of Hudson, a portrait painter of deserved local reputation, who seems to have contributed in some degree to his pupil's sense of English character and power over likeness. Reynolds' successes began early, and were scarcely interrupted throughout life. His first patrons were Lords Mount Edgumbe and Keppel, the latter of whom he accompanied, in 1749, on a long yachting tour to the Mediterranean, during which he had the opportunity of spending some time at Rome, and of visiting all the other great Italian cities famous for former schools of art. He returned to London in 1752, and soon rose to the head of his profession; his portraits were compared to those of Vandyck. His claims as against the great Fleming rest chiefly on his painting of women and children. In rapid insight into character, in the faculty of seizing passing expressions, in subtle sympathy, and above all in purity and evenness of mind, he stands by the side of Velasquez, whom of all men, next to Michael Angelo, he most

admired. He acknowledged Titian as his master in colour. The incidents of Reynolds' life are but few. The life of an artist is like that of a scholar, a life of labour and study and less interrupted by common events than that of most men. For forty years he had a glorious career of well earned and well rewarded fame—fame such as few can hope to attain, and from which none can wish to detract. On the institution of the Royal Academy, its first Presidentship was conferred upon him, and at the same time he was knighted. He delivered his Discourses to the Academy during the two next years, and contributed largely to its exhibitions for twenty years. Sir Joshua never returned to Italy, but he went to Holland and the Netherlands several times, visiting the great art collections in those countries, and studying the schools of painting of which they had been the seat. In 1789 his sight began to fail him, and in a few months he had to renounce painting. He lived for three years longer, dying in 1792 in full possession of his mental powers. His body lay in state at Somerset House, and was then buried in St. Paul's.

Reynolds' Discourses on Painting are, with small exception, the only compositions from his pen which we have. They are fair examples of the 'plain style of English,' as Swift defined it, since they are distinguished for the simple use of 'proper words in proper places;' but he had not sufficient power of analysis to lay down broad theoretical principles. He found British art utterly degraded: he knew that there was a great style, having seen the works of Raffaele and Michael Angelo, and he thought it possible that their style might be separated from their personal qualities, so that ordinary men might become great by following them. He felt he had himself, in a sense, done so, and the grave humility of his character made him habitually look on himself as a rather ordinary man of faculty, whom average men might imitate with success. His own technical triumphs depended on the most delicate and watchful study of nature in its most attractive form, for he painted, as he said, the beauties of two generations, and lived in continual attention to the faintest varieties of feature and most refined shades of colour.

Goldsmith pronounced Sir Joshua the best and wisest and mildest of men. Great natural gifts, sound though limited early teaching, the society of great and gentle persons throughout life, and the close friendship of men like Johnson and Burke until death—these things, combined with a constant avoidance of evil in all its forms, all contributed to make the character and career of the re-creator of modern English art.

### 1. Gainsborough.

WHEN such a man as Gainsborough arrives to great fame, without the assistance of an academical education, without travelling to Italy, or any of those preparatory studies which have been so often recommended, he is produced as an instance how little such studies are necessary, since so great excellence may be acquired without them. This is an inference not warranted by the success of any individual; and I trust it will not be thought that I wish to make this use of it.

It must be remembered that the style and department of art which Gainsborough chose, and in which he so much excelled, did not require that he should go out of his own country for the objects of his study; they were everywhere about him; he found them in the streets and in the fields, and, from the models thus accidentally found, he selected with great judgment such as suited his purpose. As his studies were directed to the living world principally, he did not pay a general attention to the works of the various masters, though they are, in my opinion, always of great use, even when the character of our subject requires us to depart from some of their principles. It cannot be denied, that excellence in the department of the art which he professed may exist without them; that in such subjects, and



in the manner that belongs to them, the want of them is supplied, and more than supplied, by natural sagacity, and a minute observation of particular nature. If Gainsborough did not look at Nature with a poet's eye, it must be acknowledged that he saw her with the eye of a painter, and gave a faithful, if not a poetical, representation of what he had before him.

Though he did not much attend to the works of the great historical painters of former ages, yet he was well aware that the language of the art—the art of imitation—must be learned somewhere; and as he knew that he could not learn it in an equal degree from his contemporaries, he very judiciously applied himself to the Flemish School, who are undoubtedly the greatest masters of one necessary branch of art; and he did not need to go out of his own country for examples of that school: from that he learnt the harmony of colouring, the management and disposition of light and shadow, and every means which the masters of it practised, to ornament and give splendour to their works. And to satisfy himself as well as others, how well he knew the mechanism and artifice which they employed to bring out that tone of colour which we so much admire in their works. he occasionally made copies from Rubens, Teniers, and Vandyck, which it would be no disgrace to the most accurate connoisseur to mistake, at the first sight, for the works of those masters. What he thus learned, he applied to the originals of nature, which he saw with his own eyes; and imitated, not in the manner of those masters, but in his own.

Whether he most excelled in portraits, landscapes, or fancy pictures, it is difficult to determine: whether his portraits were most admirable for exact truth of resemblance, or his landscapes for a portrait-like representation of nature,

such as we see in the works of Rubens, Ruysdael, and others of those schools. In his fancy pictures, when he had fixed on his object of imitation, whether it was the mean and vulgar form of a wood-cutter, or a child of an interesting character, as he did not attempt to raise the one, so neither did he lose any of the natural grace and elegance of the other; such a grace, and such an elegance, as are more frequently found in cottages than in courts. This excellence was his own, the result of his particular observation and taste; for this he was certainly not indebted to the Flemish School, nor indeed to any school; for his grace was not academical or antique, but selected by himself from the great school of nature; and there are yet a thousand modes of grace, which are neither theirs nor his, but lie open in the multiplied scenes and figures of life, to be brought out by skilful and faithful observers.—*Discourse XIV.*

## 2. Michael Angelo.

THE sudden maturity to which Michael Angelo brought our art, and the comparative feebleness of his followers and imitators, might perhaps be reasonably, at least plausibly explained, if we had time for such an examination. At present I shall only observe, that the subordinate parts of our art, and perhaps of other arts, expand themselves by a slow and progressive growth; but those which depend on a native vigour of imagination generally burst forth at once in fulness of beauty. Of this Homer probably, and Shakspeare more assuredly, are signal examples. Michael Angelo possessed the poetical part of our art in a most eminent degree; and the same daring spirit, which urged him first to explore the unknown regions of the imagination, delighted with the novelty, and animated by the success of his discoveries,

could not have failed to stimulate and impel him forward in his career beyond those limits, which his followers, destitute of the same incentives, had not strength to pass.

To distinguish between correctness of drawing and that part which respects the imagination, we may say the one approaches to the mechanical (which in its way, too, may make just pretensions to genius), and the other to the poetical. To encourage a solid and vigorous course of study, it may not be amiss to suggest, that perhaps a confidence in the mechanic produces a boldness in the poetic. He that is sure of the goodness of his ship and tackle puts out fearlessly from the shore; and he who knows that his hand can execute whatever his fancy can suggest, sports with more freedom in embodying the visionary forms of his own creation. I will not say Michael Angelo was eminently poetical, only because he was greatly mechanical; but I am sure that mechanic excellence invigorated and emboldened his mind to carry painting into the regions of poetry, and to emulate that art in its most adventurous flights. Michael Angelo equally possessed both qualifications. . . .

The great artist who has been so much the subject of the present discourse, was distinguished even from his infancy for his indefatigable diligence; and this was continued through his whole life, till prevented by extreme old age. The poorest of men, as he observed himself, did not labour from necessity, more than he did from choice. Indeed, from all the circumstances related of his life, he appears not to have had the least conception that his art was to be acquired by any other means than great labour; and yet he, of all men that ever lived, might make the greatest pretensions to the efficacy of native genius and inspiration. I have no doubt that he would have thought it no disgrace, that it should be said of him, as he himself said of Raffaele, that he did not

possess his art from nature, but by long study. He was conscious that the great excellence to which he arrived was gained by dint of labour, and was unwilling to have it thought that any transcendent skill, however natural its effects might seem, could be purchased at a cheaper price than he had paid for it. This seems to have been the true drift of his observation. We cannot suppose it made with any intention of depreciating the genius of Raffaele, of whom he always spoke, as *Condivi* says, with the greatest respect: though they were rivals, no such illiberality existed between them; and Raffaele on his part entertained the greatest veneration for Michael Angelo, as appears from the speech which is recorded of him, that he congratulated himself, and thanked God, that he was born in the same age with that painter.

If the high esteem and veneration in which Michael Angelo has been held by all nations and in all ages, should be put to the account of prejudice, it must still be granted that those prejudices could not have been entertained without a cause: the ground of our prejudice then becomes the source of our admiration. But from whatever it proceeds, or whatever it is called, it will not, I hope, be thought presumptuous in me to appear in the train, I cannot say of his imitators, but of his admirers. I have taken another course, one more suited to my abilities, and to the taste of the times in which I live. Yet, however unequal I feel myself to that attempt, were I now to begin the world again, I would tread in the steps of that great master: to kiss the hem of his garment, to catch the slightest of his perfections, would be glory and distinction enough for an ambitious man.

I feel a self-congratulation in knowing myself capable of such sensations as he intended to excite. I reflect, not

without vanity, that these discourses bear testimony of my admiration of that truly divine man; and I should desire that the last words which I should pronounce in this Academy, and from this place, might be the name of—MICHAEL ANGELO.—*Discourse XV.*

### 3. The Limits of Imitation in Art.

AMONGST the painters and the writers on painting, there is one maxim universally admitted, and continually inculcated. Imitate nature is the invariable rule; but I know none who have explained in what manner this rule is to be understood; the consequence of which is, that every one takes it in the most obvious sense, that objects are represented naturally when they have such relief that they seem real. It may appear strange, perhaps, to hear this sense of the rule disputed; but it must be considered, that, if the excellency of a painter consisted only in this kind of imitation, painting must lose its rank, and be no longer considered as a liberal art, and sister to poetry, this imitation being merely mechanical, in which the slowest intellect is always sure to succeed best; for the painter of genius cannot stoop to drudgery, in which the understanding has no part; and what pretence has the art to claim kindred with poetry, but by its powers over the imagination? To this power the painter of genius directs his aim; in this sense he studies nature, and often arrives at his end, even by being unnatural in the confined sense of the word.

The grand style of painting requires this minute attention to be carefully avoided, and must be kept as separate from it as the style of poetry from that of history. Poetical ornaments destroy that air of truth and plainness which ought to characterize history; but the very being of poetry

consists in departing from this plain narration, and adopting every ornament that will warm the imagination. To desire to see the excellences of each style united, to mingle the Dutch with the Italian school, is to join contrarieties which cannot subsist together, and which destroy the efficacy of each other. The Italian attends only to the invariable, the great and general, ideas which are fixed and inherent in universal nature; the Dutch, on the contrary, to literal truth, and a minute exactness in the detail, as I may say, of nature modified by accident. The attention to these petty peculiarities is the very cause of this naturalness so much admired in the Dutch pictures, which, if we suppose it to be a beauty, is certainly of a lower order, which ought to give place to a beauty of a superior kind, since one cannot be obtained but by departing from the other.

If my opinion was asked concerning the works of Michael Angelo, whether they would receive any advantage from possessing this mechanical merit, I should not scruple to say they would not only receive no advantage, but would lose, in a great measure, the effect which they now have on every mind susceptible of great and noble ideas. His works may be said to be all genius and soul; and why should they be loaded with heavy matter, which can only counteract his purpose by retarding the progress of the imagination?

If this opinion should be thought one of the wild extravagances of enthusiasm, I shall only say, that those who censure it are not conversant in the works of the great masters. It is very difficult to determine the exact degree of enthusiasm that the arts of painting and poetry may admit. There may perhaps be too great an indulgence, as well as too great a restraint of imagination: and if the one produces incoherent monsters, the other produces what is

full as bad, lifeless insipidity. An intimate knowledge of the passions, and good sense, but not common sense, must at last determine its limits. It has been thought, and I believe, with reason, that Michael Angelo sometimes transgressed those limits; and I think I have seen figures of his of which it was very difficult to determine whether they were in the highest degree sublime or extremely ridiculous. Such faults may be said to be the ebullitions of genius; but at least he had this merit, that he never was insipid, and whatever passion his works may excite, they will always escape contempt.

What I have had under consideration is the sublimest style, particularly that of Michael Angelo, the Homer of painting. Other kinds may admit of this naturalness, which of the lowest kind is the chief merit; but in painting, as in poetry, the highest style has the least of common nature.

One may very safely recommend a little more enthusiasm to the modern painters; too much is certainly not the vice of the present age. The Italians seem to have been continually declining in this respect, from the time of Michael Angelo to that of Carlo Maratti, and from thence to the very bathos of insipidity to which they are now sunk; so that there is no need of remarking, that where I mentioned the Italian painters in opposition to the Dutch, I mean not the moderns, but the heads of the old Roman and Bolognian schools; nor did I mean to include in my idea of an Italian painter, the Venetian School, which may be said to be the Dutch part of the Italian genius. I have only to add a word of advice to the painters, that however excellent they may be in painting naturally, they would not flatter themselves very much upon it; and to the connoisseurs, that when they see a cat or a fiddle painted so finely, that as the phrase is, it looks as if you could take it up, they would not

for that reason immediately compare the painter to Raffaele and Michael Angelo.—*Idler*, No. 79.

#### 4. The Art Critic.

I WAS much pleased with your ridicule of those shallow critics, whose judgment, though often right as far as it goes, yet reaches only to inferior beauties, and who, unable to comprehend the whole, judge only by parts, and from thence determine the merit of extensive works. But there is another kind of critic still worse, who judges by narrow rules, and those too often false, and which, though they should be true, and founded on nature, will lead him but a very little way towards the just estimation of the sublime beauties in works of genius; for whatever part of an art can be executed or criticised by rules, that part is no longer the work of genius, which implies excellence out of the reach of rules. For my own part I profess myself an *Idler*, and love to give my judgment, such as it is, from my immediate perceptions, without much fatigue of thinking; and I am of opinion, that if a man has not those perceptions right, it will be vain for him to endeavour to supply their place by rules, which may enable him to talk more learnedly, but not to distinguish more acutely. Another reason which has lessened my affection for the study of criticism is, that critics, so far as I have observed, debar themselves from receiving any pleasure from the polite arts, at the same time that they profess to love and admire them: for these rules, being always uppermost, give them such a propensity to criticise, that instead of 'giving up the reins of their imagination into their author's hands,' their frigid minds are employed in examining whether the performance be according to the rules of art.



To those who are resolved to be critics in spite of nature, and at the same time have no great disposition to much reading and study, I would recommend to them to assume the character of connoisseur, which may be purchased at a much cheaper rate than that of a critic in poetry. The remembrance of a few names of painters, with their general characters, with a few rules of the academy, which they may pick up among the painters, will go a great way towards making a very notable connoisseur.

With a gentleman of this cast, I visited last week the Cartoons at Hampton-court; he was just returned from Italy, a connoisseur of course, and of course his mouth full of nothing but 'the grace of Raffaele, the purity of Dominichino, the learning of Poussin, and the air of Guido,' the greatness of taste of the Caraccis, and the sublimity and grand contorno of Michael Angelo; with all the rest of the cant of criticism, which he emitted with that volubility which generally those orators have who annex no ideas to their words.

As we were passing through the rooms, in our way to the gallery, I made him observe a whole length of Charles the First, by Vandyke, as a perfect representation of the character as well as the figure of the man. He agreed it was very fine, but it wanted spirit and contrast, and had not the flowing line, without which a figure could not possibly be graceful. When we entered the gallery, I thought I could perceive him recollecting his rules by which he was to criticise Raffaele. I shall pass over his observation of the boats being too little, and other criticisms of that kind, till we arrived at St. Paul preaching. 'This,' says he, 'is esteemed the most excellent of all the cartoons; what nobleness. what dignity there is in that

figure of St. Paul; and yet what an addition to that nobleness could Raffaele have given had the art of contrast been known in his time! but, above all, the flowing line, which constitutes grace and beauty! You would not then have seen an upright figure standing equally on both legs, and both hands stretched forward in the same direction, and his drapery, to all appearance, without the least art of disposition.' The following picture is the Charge to Peter. 'Here,' says he, 'are twelve upright figures; what a pity it is that Raffaele was not acquainted with the pyramidal principle! He would then have contrived the figures in the middle to have been on higher ground, or the figures at the extremities stooping or lying, which would not only have formed the group into the shape of a pyramid, but likewise contrasted the standing figures. Indeed,' added he, 'I have often lamented that so great a genius as Raffaele had not lived in this enlightened age, since the art has been reduced to principles, and had had his education in one of the modern academies; what glorious works might we then have expected from his divine pencil!'

I shall trouble you no longer with my friend's observations, which, I suppose, you are now able to continue by yourself. It is curious to observe, that, at the same time that great admiration is pretended for a name of fixed reputation, objections are raised against those very qualities by which that great name was acquired.

Those critics are continually lamenting that Raffaele had not the colouring and harmony of Rubens, or the light and shadow of Rembrandt, without considering how much the gay harmony of the former, and affectation of the latter, would take from the dignity of Raffaele; and yet Rubens had great harmony, and Rembrandt understood light and shadow; but what may be an excellence in a lower class

of painting, becomes a blemish in a higher ; as the quick, sprightly turn, which is the life and beauty of epigrammatic compositions, would but ill suit with the majesty of heroic poetry.

To conclude ; I would not be thought to infer, from any thing that has been said, that rules are absolutely unnecessary ; but to censure scrupulosity, a servile attention to minute exactness, which is sometimes inconsistent with higher excellency, and is lost in the blaze of expanded genius.

I do not know whether you will think painting a general subject. By inserting this letter, perhaps, you will incur the censure a man would deserve, whose business being to entertain a whole room, should turn his back to the company, and talk to a particular person.—*Idler*, No. 76.

## XLII.

### OLIVER GOLDSMITH.

1729—1774.

OLIVER GOLDSMITH, born 1729, at Pallasmore, in County Longford, was educated at Trinity College, Dublin, 1745—1749. After some studies at Leyden, he took a medical degree at Louvain, and travelled on foot through a part of the Continent, 1754—1755. Having tried without success to earn his livelihood as a schoolmaster, he became a hack writer for booksellers in 1757. He attracted the attention of critics by the essays entitled *The Citizen of the World*, in 1760; and in 1764 produced his two most successful works, *The Traveller*, a poem, and the *Vicar of Wakefield*, a novel. From that time, partly as an essayist, partly as a writer for the stage, Goldsmith kept himself constantly before the public. He produced another classical poem, the *Deserted Village*, in 1770, and compiled *School Histories of Rome, England, and Greece*, and a *History of Animated Nature*, for the London booksellers, 1767—1773. But, careless of making or saving money, Goldsmith was always in difficulties, and his early death, in 1774, was probably hastened by mental disquietude.

The peculiar merits of Goldsmith's writings are clearness of thought, ease of style, and simple language. He never writes for effect, and there is scarcely a sentence in his works that a child might not understand. Yet in powers of judgment and thought, as well as in warm and deep sympathies, he was far above the great mass of his contemporaries. He was the first to predict the French Revolution, and the Swedish *coup-d'état*. He is perhaps the only writer of his times who thoroughly understood the social condition of the Continent. Nor was he less observant of English

society, and the *Deserted Village* has been often quoted by economists in illustration of the change which has gradually substituted large estates for the small holdings of a numerous yeomanry. Among modern authors Goldsmith has been especially imitated by Washington Irving.

### 1. The Political Condition of Sweden, France, and Holland.

SWEDEN, though now seemingly a strenuous assertor of its liberties, is probably only hastening on to despotism. Their senators, while they pretend to vindicate the freedom of the people, are only establishing their own independence. The deluded people will, however, at last perceive the miseries of an aristocratical government; they will perceive that the administration of a society of men is ever more painful than that of one only. They will fly from this most oppressive of all forms, where one single member is capable of controlling the whole, to take refuge under the throne, which will ever be attentive to their complaints. No people long endure an aristocratical government, when they can apply elsewhere for redress. The lower orders of people may be enslaved for a time by a number of tyrants, but, upon the first opportunity, they will ever take a refuge in despotism or democracy.

As the Swedes are making concealed approaches to despotism, the French, on the other hand, are imperceptibly vindicating themselves into freedom. When I consider that those parliaments (the members of which are all created by the court, the presidents of which can act only by immediate direction) presume even to mention privileges and freedom, who, till of late, received directions from the throne with implicit humility; when this is considered, I cannot help fancying that the genius of freedom has entered that king-

dom in disguise. If they have but three weak monarchs more successively on the throne, the mask will be laid aside, and the country will certainly once more be free.

When I compare the figure which the Dutch make in Europe with that they assume in Asia, I am struck with surprise. In Asia, I find them the great lords of all the Indian seas; in Europe, the timid inhabitants of a paltry state. No longer the sons of freedom, but of avarice; no longer assertors of their rights by courage, but by negotiations; fawning on those who insult them, and crouching under the rod of every neighbouring power. Without a friend to save them in distress, and without virtue to save themselves; their government is poor, and their private wealth will serve to invite some neighbouring invader.—  
*Citizen of the World.*

## 2. Dr. Primrose in Prison.

THE next morning I communicated to my wife and children the scheme I had planned of reforming the prisoners, which they received with universal disapprobation, alleging the impossibility and impropriety of it; adding, that my endeavours would no way contribute to their amendment, but might probably disgrace my calling.

‘Excuse me,’ returned I, ‘these people, however fallen, are still men, and that is a very good title to my affections. Good counsel rejected returns to enrich the giver’s bosom; and though the instruction I communicate may not mend them, yet it will assuredly mend myself. If these wretches, my children, were princes, there would be thousands ready to offer their ministry; but in my opinion, the heart that is buried in a dungeon is as precious as that seated upon a throne. Yes, my treasures, if I can mend them I will;

perhaps they will not all despise me. Perhaps I may catch up even one from the gulph, and that will be great gain; for is there upon earth a gem so precious as the human soul?’

Thus saying, I left them, and descended to the common prison, where I found the prisoners very merry, expecting my arrival; and each prepared with some gaol trick to play upon the doctor. Thus, as I was going to begin, one turned my wig awry, as if by accident, and then asked my pardon. A second, who stood at some distance, had a knack of spitting through his teeth, which fell in showers upon my book. A third would cry Amen in such an affected tone, as gave the rest great delight. A fourth had slyly picked my pocket of my spectacles. But there was one whose trick gave more universal pleasure than all the rest; for observing the manner in which I had disposed my books on the table before me, he very dexterously displaced one of them, and put an obscene jest-book of his own in the place. However, I took no notice of all that this mischievous group of little beings could do, but went on, perfectly sensible that what was ridiculous in my attempt would excite mirth only the first or second time, while what was serious would be permanent. My design succeeded, and in less than six days some were penitent, and all attentive.

It was now that I applauded my perseverance and address, at thus giving sensibility to wretches divested of every moral feeling, and now began to think of doing them temporal services also, by rendering their situation somewhat more comfortable. Their time had hitherto been divided between famine and excess, tumultuous riot and bitter repining. Their only employment was quarrelling among each other, playing at cribbage, and cutting tobacco stoppers. From this last mode of idle industry I took the hint of setting such as chose

to work at cutting pegs for tobacconists and shoemakers, the proper wood being bought by a general subscription, and when manufactured, sold by my appointment; so that each earned something every day: a trifle indeed, but sufficient to maintain him.

I did not stop here, but instituted fines for the punishment of immorality, and rewards for peculiar industry. Thus, in less than a fortnight, I had formed them into something social and humane, and had the pleasure of regarding myself as a legislator, who had brought men from their native ferocity into friendship and obedience.—*The Vicar of Wakefield*.

### 3. Indecencies of Antigallican feeling.

THE French have been long acknowledged to have much bravery: a great part of Europe has owned their superiority in this respect; and I know scarcely any country but that which has beaten them, that dares deny the contrary. In short, I consider them in the same light with the subordinate characters in an epic poem, who are generally described as very terrible, only to heighten our idea of the hero who conquers them.

To beat the French, and to scold them too, is out-heroding Herod; if we were not able to knock them off the head, I should not be displeased if we shewed our resentment by addressing their ears with reproach; but as it is, we only resemble a country justice, who, not content with putting a culprit in the stocks, stands by to reproach him for getting there.

Jack Reptile is a professed Antigallican: he gets drunk with French wine three times a week. To convince the world of his detestation of Monsieur Soup-maigre, he as-



sure the company he has once, when he was young, boxed three Frenchmen, *'one down f'other come on,'* and beat them all; he wonders how French scoundrels can live who eat nothing but salads and frogs the whole year round. Jack hates everything that is French, except their wine, and has been known to quarrel with some of his countrymen for wearing a bag-wig. His virulence against the enemy has even soured his disposition to his friends, and he seems never happy except when indulging in invective.

If the present war or its causes happen to be the subject of conversation, he lays all the blame upon them alone, and can see neither avarice nor injustice in the planters of our side. If peace be the topic, *'his counsel is for open war;'* nor can he think any terms honourable or advantageous that do not put us in possession, not only of all we have conquered, but almost all the enemy have to lose. Thus, while our soldiers earn victory abroad, Jack enjoys the price of it at home, and, unacquainted with the perils they endure, seems unmindful how long they undergo them. War gives him no uneasiness; he sits and soaks in profound security; the distresses, the calamities of mankind, neither interrupt his tranquillity, nor lessen his draught; the miseries of his fellow-creatures, like the pictures of a battle, serve rather to excite pleasure than pain. Ten thousand fallen on one field make a curious article in the gazette. Hundreds sunk to the bottom by one broadside, furnish out the topic of the day, and zest his coffee: the very tempest guides him to his harbour. In short, he fancies he shews his loyalty by reproaches, and his courage by continuing the war.

What I would intend by all this, is to persuade my countrymen by the fire-side to behave with the same degree of merit with those in the field; while they cover us with glory abroad, let us not tarnish it by invectives at home. I

scarce read a periodical paper that is not filled with indecencies of this kind, and as many of these papers pass into other countries, what idea will they form, not only of our good sense but humanity, when they see us thus depreciating the enemies we have subdued? This, in fact, is lessening ourselves. An easy conquest is no very honourable one. I remember to have heard M. Voltaire observe, in a large company at his house at Monrion, that at the battle of Dettingen, the English exhibited prodigies of valour; but they soon lessened their well-bought conquest, by lessening the merits of those they had conquered. Their despising the French then, he continued to observe, was probably the cause of their defeat at Fontenoy: one army fought with all the security of presumption; the other with all the fury of men willing to rescue their character from undeserved contempt.—*Essays*.

#### 4. A General Election.

THE English are at present employed in celebrating a feast which becomes general every seventh year; the parliament of the nation being then dissolved, and another appointed to be chosen. This solemnity falls infinitely short of our feast of the lanterns, in magnificence and splendour: it is also surpassed by others of the east in unanimity and pure devotion; but no festival in the world can compare with it for eating. Their eating, indeed, amazes me; had I five hundred heads, and were each head furnished with brains, yet would they all be insufficient to compute the number of cows, pigs, geese, and turkies, which upon this occasion die for the good of their country.

To say the truth, eating seems to make a grand ingredient in all English parties of zeal, business, or amusement.

When a church is to be built, or an hospital endowed, the directors assemble, and instead of consulting upon it, they eat upon it, by which means the business goes forward with success. When the poor are to be relieved, the officers appointed to dole out public charity, assemble and eat upon it: nor has it ever been known, that they filled the bellies of the poor, till they had previously satisfied their own. But in the election of magistrates, the people seem to exceed all bounds; the merits of a candidate are often measured by the number of his treats; his constituents assemble, eat upon him, and lend their applause, not to his integrity or sense, but to the quantities of his beef and brandy.

And yet I could forgive this people their plentiful meals on this occasion, as it is extremely natural for every man to eat a great deal when he gets it for nothing; but what amazes me is, that all this good living no way contributes to improve their good-humour. On the contrary, they seem to lose their temper as they lose their appetites; every morsel they swallow, and every glass they pour down, serves to increase their animosity. Many an honest man, before as harmless as a tame rabbit, when loaded with a single election dinner, has become more dangerous than a charged culverin. Upon one of these occasions, I have actually seen a bloody-minded man-milliner sally forth at the head of a mob, determined to face a desperate pastry-cook, who was general of the opposite party.

But you must not suppose they are without a pretext for thus beating each other. On the contrary, no man here is so uncivilized as to beat his neighbour without producing very sufficient reasons. One candidate, for instance, treats with gin, a spirit of their own manufacture; another always drinks brandy imported from abroad. Brandy is a whole-

some liquor ; gin a liquor wholly their own. This, then, furnishes an obvious cause of quarrel, whether it be most reasonable to get drunk with gin, or get drunk with brandy ? The mob meet upon the debate ; fight themselves sober ; and then draw off to get drunk again, and charge for another encounter. So that the English may now properly be said to be engaged in war ; since, while they are subduing their enemies abroad, they are breaking each other's heads at home.—*Citizen of the World.*

### 5. The Sagacity of the Spider.

I PERCEIVED, about four years ago, a large spider in one corner of my room, making its web, and though the maid frequently levelled her fatal broom against the labours of the little animal, I had the good fortune then to prevent its destruction, and I may say, it more than paid me by the entertainment it afforded.

In three days the web was with incredible diligence completed ; nor could I avoid thinking that the insect seemed to exult in its new abode. It frequently traversed it round, examined the strength of every part of it, retired into its hole, and came out very frequently. The first enemy, however, it had to encounter, was another and a much larger spider, which, having no web of its own, and having probably exhausted all its stock in former labours of this kind, came to invade the property of its neighbour. Soon then a terrible encounter ensued, in which the invader seemed to have the victory, and the laborious spider was obliged to take refuge in its hole. Upon this I perceived the victor using every art to draw the enemy from his stronghold. He seemed to go off, but quickly returned, and when he found all arts vain,

began to demolish the new web without mercy. This brought on another battle, and contrary to my expectations, the laborious spider became conqueror, and fairly killed his antagonist.

Now then, in peaceable possession of what was justly its own, it waited three days with the utmost impatience, repairing the breaches of its web, and taking no sustenance that I could perceive. At last, however, a large blue fly fell into the snare, and struggled hard to get loose. The spider gave it leave to entangle itself as much as possible, but it seemed to be too strong for the cobweb. I must own I was greatly surprised when I saw the spider immediately sally out, and in less than a minute weave a new net round its captive, by which the motion of its wings was stopped, and when it was fairly hampered in this manner, it was seized, and dragged into the hole.

In this manner it lived, in a precarious state, and nature seemed to have fitted it for such a life ; for upon a single fly it subsisted for more than a week. I once put a wasp into the net, but when the spider came out in order to seize it as usual, upon perceiving what kind of an enemy it had to deal with, it instantly broke all the bands that held it fast, and contributed all that lay in its power to disengage so formidable an antagonist. When the wasp was at liberty, I expected the spider would have set about repairing the breaches that were made in its net, but those it seems were irreparable, wherefore the cobweb was now entirely forsaken, and a new one begun, which was completed in the usual time.

I had now a mind to try how many cobwebs a single spider could furnish ; wherefore I destroyed this, and the insect set about another. When I destroyed the other also, its whole stock seemed entirely exhausted, and it

could spin no more. The arts it made use of to support itself, now deprived of its great means of subsistence, were indeed surprising. I have seen it roll up its legs like a ball, and lie motionless for hours together, but cautiously watching all the time; when a fly happened to approach sufficiently near, it would dart out all at once, and often seize its prey.

Of this life, however, it soon began to grow weary, and resolved to invade the possession of some other spider, since it could not make a web of its own. It formed an attack upon a neighbouring fortification with great vigour, and at first was as vigorously repulsed. Not daunted, however, with one defeat, in this manner it continued to lay siege to another's web for three days, and at length, having killed the defendant, actually took possession. When smaller flies happen to fall into the snare, the spider does not sally out at once, but very patiently waits till it is sure of them; for upon his immediately approaching, the terror of his appearance might give the captive strength sufficient to get loose: the manner then is to wait patiently till, by ineffectual and impotent struggles, the captive has wasted all its strength, and then it becomes a certain and easy conquest.

The insect I am now describing lived three years; every year it changed its skin, and got a new set of legs. I have sometimes plucked off a leg, which grew again in two or three days. At first it dreaded my approach to its web, but at last it became so familiar as to take a fly out of my hand, and upon my touching any part of the web, would immediately leave its hole, prepared either for a defence or an attack.—*The Bee.*

## 6. Dr. Primrose the Monogamist.

MATRIMONY was always one of my favourite topics, and I wrote several sermons to prove its happiness; but there was a peculiar tenet which I made a point of supporting: for I maintained with Whiston, that it was unlawful for a priest of the Church of England, after the death of his first wife, to take a second, or, to express it in one word, I valued myself upon being a strict monogamist.

I was early initiated into this important dispute, on which so many laborious volumes have been written. I published some tracts upon the subject myself, which, as they never sold, I have the consolation of thinking were read only by the happy *few*. Some of my friends called this my weak side; but alas! they had not like me made it the subject of long contemplation. The more I reflected upon it, the more important it appeared. I even went a step beyond Whiston in displaying my principles: as he had engraven upon his wife's tomb that she was the *only* wife of William Whiston; so I wrote a similar epitaph for my wife, though still living, in which I extolled her prudence, economy, and obedience till death; and having got it copied *fait*, with an elegant frame, it was placed over the chimney-piece, where it answered several very useful purposes. It admonished my wife of her duty to me, and my fidelity to her; it inspired her with a passion for fame, and constantly put her in mind of her end.

It was thus, perhaps, from hearing marriage so often recommended, that my eldest son, just upon leaving college, fixed his affections upon the daughter of a neighbouring clergyman, who was a dignitary in the church, and in circumstances to give her a large fortune: but fortune

was her smallest accomplishment. . . . As Mr. Wilmot knew that I could make a very handsome settlement on my son, he was not averse to the match; so both families lived together in all that harmony which generally precedes an expected alliance. Being convinced by experience that the days of courtship are the most happy of our lives, I was willing enough to lengthen the period; and the various amusements which the young couple every day shared in each other's company, seemed to increase their passion. . . .

Some months were elapsed in this manner, till at last it was thought convenient to fix a day for the nuptials of the young couple, who seemed earnestly to desire it. During the preparations for the wedding, I need not describe the busy importance of my wife, nor the sly looks of my daughters: in fact, my attention was fixed on another object, the completing a tract which I intended shortly to publish in defence of my favourite principle. As I looked upon this as a master-piece, both for argument and style, I could not in the pride of my heart avoid showing it to my old friend, Mr. Wilmot, as I made no doubt of receiving his approbation; but not till too late I discovered that he was violently attached to the contrary opinion, and with good reason; for he was at that time actually courting a fourth wife. This, as may be expected, produced a dispute attended with some acrimony, which threatened to interrupt our intended alliance: but on the day before that appointed for the ceremony, we agreed to discuss the subject at large.

It was managed with proper spirit on both sides: he asserted that I was heterodox, I retorted the charge; he replied, and I rejoined. In the mean time, while the controversy was hottest, I was called out by one of my



relations, who, with a face of concern, advised me to give up the dispute, at least till my son's wedding was over. 'How,' cried I, 'relinquish the cause of truth, and let him be a husband, already driven to the very verge of absurdity. You might as well advise me to give up my fortune, as my argument.' 'Your fortune,' returned my friend, 'I am now sorry to inform you, is almost nothing. The merchant in town, in whose hands your money was lodged, has gone off, to avoid a statute of bankruptcy, and is thought not to have left a shilling in the pound. I was unwilling to shock you or the family with the account till after the wedding: but now it may serve to moderate your warmth in the argument; for, I suppose, your own prudence will enforce the necessity of dissembling, at least till your son has the young lady's fortune secure.'——'Well,' returned I, 'if what you tell me be true, and if I am to be a beggar, it shall never make me a rascal, or induce me to disavow my principles. I'll go this moment and inform the company of my circumstances; and as for the argument, I even here retract my former concessions in the old gentleman's favour, nor will I allow him now to be a husband in any sense of the expression.'

It would be endless to describe the different sensations of both families, when I divulged the news of our misfortune; but what others felt was slight to what the lovers appeared to endure. Mr. Wilmot, who seemed before sufficiently inclined to break off the match, was by this blow soon determined: one virtue he had in perfection, which was prudence, too often the only one that is left us at seventy-two.—*Vicar of Wakefield.*

### 7. On National Prejudices.

AMONGST a multiplicity of other topics, we took occasion to talk of the different characters of the several nations of Europe; when one of the gentlemen, cocking his hat, and assuming such an air of importance as if he had possessed all the merit of the English nation in his own person, declared that the Dutch were a parcel of avaricious wretches; the French a set of flattering sycophants; that the Germans were drunken sots, and beastly gluttons; and the Spaniards proud, haughty, and surly tyrants: but that in bravery, generosity, clemency, and in every other virtue, the English excelled all the world.

This very learned and judicious remark was received with a general smile of approbation by all the company—all, I mean, but your humble servant; who, endeavouring to keep my gravity as well as I could, and reclining my head upon my arm, continued for some time in a posture of affected thoughtfulness, as if I had been musing on something else, and did not seem to attend to the subject of conversation; hoping, by this means, to avoid the disagreeable necessity of explaining myself, and thereby depriving the gentleman of his imaginary happiness.

But my pseudo-patriot had no mind to let me escape so easily: not satisfied that his opinion should pass without contradiction, he was determined to have it ratified by the suffrage of every one in the company; for which purpose, addressing himself to me with an air of inexpressible confidence, he asked me if I was not of the same way of thinking. As I am never forward in giving my opinion, especially when I have reason to believe that it will not be agreeable; so, when I am obliged to give it, I always hold it for a maxim to speak my real senti-

ments. I therefore told him, that, for my own part, I should not have ventured to talk in such a peremptory strain, unless I had made the tour of Europe, and examined the manners of the several nations with great care and accuracy; that, perhaps a more impartial judge would not scruple to affirm, that the Dutch were more frugal and industrious, the French more temperate and polite, the Germans more hardy and patient of labour and fatigue, and the Spaniards more staid and sedate, than the English; who, though undoubtedly brave and generous, were at the same time rash, headstrong, and impetuous, too apt to be elated with prosperity, and to despond in adversity. . . .

Did these prejudices prevail only among the meanest and lowest of the people, perhaps they might be excused, as they have few, if any opportunities of correcting them by reading, travelling, or conversing with foreigners: but the misfortune is, that they infect the minds, and influence the conduct even of our gentlemen; of those, I mean, who have every title to this appellation but an exemption from prejudice, which, however, in my opinion, ought to be regarded as the characteristic mark of a gentleman: for let a man's birth be ever so high, his station ever so exalted, or his fortune ever so large, yet, if he is not free from the national and all other prejudices, I should make bold to tell him, that he had a low and vulgar mind, and had no just claim to the character of a gentleman. And, in fact, you will always find, that those are most apt to boast of national merit, who have little or no merit of their own to depend on, than which, to be sure, nothing is more natural: the slender vine twists around the sturdy oak for no other reason in the world, but because it has not strength sufficient to support itself.

Should it be alleged in defence of national prejudice, that it is the natural and necessary growth of love to our country, and that therefore the former cannot be destroyed without hurting the latter; I answer that this is a gross fallacy and delusion. That it is the growth of love to our country, I will allow; but that it is the natural and necessary growth of it, I absolutely deny. Superstition and enthusiasm too are the growth of religion; but who ever took it in his head to affirm, that they are the necessary growth of this noble principle? They are, if you will, the bastard sprouts of this heavenly plant; but not its natural and genuine branches, and may safely enough be lopt off, without doing any harm to the parent stock: nay, perhaps, till once they are lopt off, this goodly tree can never flourish in perfect health and vigour.

Is it not very possible that I may love my own country, without hating the natives of other countries? That I may exert the most heroic bravery, the most undaunted resolution, in defending its laws and liberty, without despising all the rest of the world as cowards and poltroons? Most certainly it is: and if it were not—but what need I suppose what is absolutely impossible?—but if it were not, I must own I should prefer the title of the ancient philosopher, namely, a citizen of the world, to that of an Englishman, a Frenchman, an European, or to any other appellation whatever.—*Essays*.

## XLIII.

### EDMUND BURKE.

1729—1797.

EDMUND BURKE was born in Dublin, Jan. 12, 1729. His first official connection with English politics was as Private Secretary to the Marquis of Rockingham, in 1765. His first speech in the House of Commons was delivered early in that year on the too memorable Stamp Act, which Lord Rockingham had brought in a Bill to repeal. Of this celebrated debate Macaulay says, 'Two great orators and statesmen, belonging to two different generations, put forth all their powers in defence of the Bill. The House of Commons heard Pitt for the last time, and Burke for the first time, and was in doubt to which of them the palm of eloquence should be assigned. It was, indeed, a splendid sunset and a splendid dawn.' Macaulay's description of Burke as an orator is worth quoting. He speaks of him as 'ignorant, indeed, or negligent of the art of adapting his reasonings and his style to the capacity and taste of his hearers, but in amplitude of comprehension and richness of imagination, superior to every orator, ancient or modern.'

From 1765 to 1797, Burke was one of the chief moving forces in English politics. His views on domestic politics may best be gathered from his *Thoughts on the Cause of the Present Discontents*, 1770, and from his two admirable speeches at Bristol, 1774 and 1780.

The three great external 'questions' with which his name is imperishably linked, are the American War, the Government of India, and the French Revolution. Two of his greatest speeches are those on 'American Taxation,' 1774, and on 'Conciliation

with America,' in 1775. The peroration of this latter oration is, perhaps, the noblest specimen of his most elevated style. It is there that his celebrated aphorism occurs: 'Magnanimity in politics is not seldom the truest wisdom; and a great empire and little minds go ill together.' In the former speech are found his famous portraits of his most eminent contemporaries—the great Earl of Chatham, that *clarum et venerabile nomen*; the brilliant but flashy Charles Townshend; the laborious but pedantic George Grenville. The passages containing these personal sketches are models of ironical and yet genuinely respectful eulogy.

The government of India had a special fascination for Burke's large and humane spirit. His chief utterances on the subject are his speeches on 'Mr. Fox's East India Bill,' 1783; on 'the Nabob of Arcot's Debts,' 1785 (regarded by Lord Brougham as his very greatest oration); and the numerous speeches connected with the impeachment of Warren Hastings. Burke's whole heart, as well as his imagination, was with the natives of India. He felt their wrongs as an outrage on England and on himself.

The French Revolution, 1789–1797, called forth all his energies during the closing years of his life. His celebrated *Reflections*, published in 1790, filled all Europe with admiration. Perhaps the chief permanent power of this great work lies in its eloquent testimony to the value of sentiment in politics as opposed to naked reason;—of settled institutions as opposed to experiments based on abstract principles;—of slow and cautious development as the sole practical guarantee of well-ordered liberty. The beneficent side of the French Revolution was hid from Burke. He could see neither the necessity of its consequence upon the hopeless corruptions of the old system, nor yet the promise which it held out for the future. Indeed, the idea of human progress, with or without revolution, was not one which coloured his life. He had a profound sense of individual weakness. The checks and the compromises of the English Constitution he had come to venerate almost as fundamental principles of nature.

The *Reflections* were followed by numerous other pamphlets on

the same absorbing subject, including his *Letters on a Regicide Peace*, 1796.

Burke died, in 1797, at Beaconsfield, broken-hearted by the death of his son. The passage referring to this bereavement in his *Letter to a Noble Lord*, 1796, is perhaps the most pathetic utterance that ever fell from a statesman.

We have no space to speak of Burke as the friend of Johnson and Goldsmith, or as the generous patron of Crabbe. It is to his character as a writer and speaker on politics that the foregoing brief remarks are addressed. In this there is a oneness and a genuineness which make him by far the most interesting politician (if we except the elder Pitt) of the eighteenth century. In all that he has written or spoken we discern the same earnest spirit: often intemperate in expression, but always sound at the core; always elevated and magnanimous, detesting everything sordid, penetrating into the principles of things, of human society and civil institutions; carrying into public life that intense admiration of everything lofty and noble, which few public men have ardour to feel or courage to express; ever calling upon this great nation (to apply his own eloquent words) 'to auspicate all her public proceedings with the old warning of the Church, *Sursum corda*.'

### 1. Peroration of the Speech on Conciliation with America.

For that service, for all service, whether of revenue, trade, or empire, my trust is in her interest in the British constitution. My hold of the colonies is in the close affection which grows from common names, from kindred blood, from similar privileges, and equal protection. These are ties, which, though light as air, are as strong as links of iron. Let the colonies always keep the idea of their civil rights associated with your government;—they will cling and grapple to you; and no force under heaven will be of power to tear them

from their allegiance. But let it be once understood, that your government may be one thing, and their privileges another: that these two things may exist without any mutual relation; the cement is gone; the cohesion is loosened; and everything hastens to decay and dissolution. As long as you have the wisdom to keep the sovereign authority of this country as the sanctuary of liberty, the sacred temple consecrated to our common faith, wherever the chosen race and sons of England worship freedom, they will turn their faces towards you. The more they multiply, the more friends you will have; the more ardently they love liberty, the more perfect will be their obedience. Slavery they can have any where. It is a weed that grows in every soil. They may have it from Spain, they may have it from Prussia. But, until you become lost to all feeling of your true interest and your natural dignity, freedom they can have from none but you. This is the commodity of price, of which you have the monopoly. This is the true act of navigation, which binds to you the commerce of the colonies, and through them secures to you the wealth of the world. Deny them this participation of freedom, and you break that sole bond, which originally made, and must still preserve, the unity of the empire. Do not entertain so weak an imagination, as that your registers and your bonds, your affidavits and your sufferances, your cockets and your clearances, are what form the great securities of your commerce. Do not dream that your letters of office, and your instructions, and your suspending clauses, are the things that hold together the great contexture of this mysterious whole. These things do not make your government. Dead instruments, passive tools as they are, it is the spirit of the English communion that gives all their life and efficacy to them. It is the spirit of the English constitution, which, infused through the mighty



mass, pervades, feeds, unites, invigorates, vivifies every part of the empire, even down to the minutest member.

Is it not the same virtue which does everything for us here in England? Do you imagine, then, that it is the land tax act which raises your revenue? that it is the annual vote in the committee of supply, which gives you your army? or that it is the mutiny bill, which inspires it with bravery and discipline? No! surely no! It is the love of the people; it is their attachment to their government, from the sense of the deep stake they have in such a glorious institution, which gives you your army and your navy, and infuses into both that liberal obedience, without which your army would be a base rabble, and your navy nothing but rotten timber.

All this, I know well enough, will sound wild and chimerical to the profane herd of those vulgar and mechanical politicians, who have no place among us; a sort of people who think that nothing exists but what is gross and material; and who therefore, far from being qualified to be directors of the great movement of empire, are not fit to turn a wheel in the machine. But to men truly initiated and rightly taught, these ruling and master principles, which, in the opinion of such men as I have mentioned, have no substantial existence, are in truth everything, and all in all. Magnanimity in politics is not seldom the truest wisdom; and a great empire and little minds go ill together. If we are conscious of our situation, and glow with zeal to fill our places as becomes our station and ourselves, we ought to auspicate all our public proceedings on America with the old warning of the Church, *Sursum corda!* We ought to elevate our minds to the greatness of that trust to which the order of Providence has called us. By adverting to the dignity of this high calling, our ancestors have turned a savage wilderness into a glorious empire; and have made

the most extensive, and the only honourable conquests, not by destroying, but by promoting the wealth, the number, the happiness of the human race. Let us get an American revenue as we have got an American empire. English privileges have made it all that it is; English privileges alone will make it all it can be.

In full confidence of this unalterable truth, I now (*quod felix faustumque sit*)—lay the first stone of the temple of peace; and I move you,

‘That the colonies and plantations of Great Britain in North America, consisting of fourteen separate governments, and containing two millions and upwards of free inhabitants, have not had the liberty and privilege of electing and sending any knights and burgesses, or others, to represent them in the high court of Parliament.’—*Speech on Conciliation with America*, 1775.

## 2. The Decay of Chivalrous Sentiment.

It is now sixteen or seventeen years since I saw the Queen of France, then the Dauphiness, at Versailles; and surely never lighted on this orb, which she hardly seemed to touch, a more delightful vision. I saw her just above the horizon, decorating and cheering the elevated sphere she just began to move in,—glittering like the morning star, full of life, and splendour, and joy. Oh, what a revolution! and what an heart must I have, to contemplate without emotion that elevation and that fall! Little did I dream when she added titles of veneration to those of enthusiastic, distant, respectful love, that she should ever be obliged to carry the sharp antidote against disgrace concealed in that bosom; little did I dream that I should have lived to see such disasters fallen upon her in a nation of gallant men, in a

nation of men of honour, and of cavaliers. I thought ten thousand swords must have leaped from their scabbards to avenge even a look that threatened her with insult. But the age of chivalry is gone. That of sophisters, economists, and calculators has succeeded; and the glory of Europe is extinguished for ever. Never, never more shall we behold that generous loyalty to rank and sex, that proud submission, that dignified obedience, that subordination of the heart, which kept alive, even in servitude itself, the spirit of an exalted freedom. The unbought grace of life, the cheap defence of nations, the nurse of manly sentiment and heroic enterprise, is gone! It is gone, that sensibility of principle, that chastity of honour, which felt a stain like a wound, which inspired courage whilst it mitigated ferocity, which ennobled whatever it touched, and under which vice itself lost half its evil, by losing all its grossness.

This mixed system of opinion and sentiment had its origin in the ancient chivalry; and the principle, though varied in its appearance by the varying state of human affairs, subsisted and influenced through a long succession of generations, even to the time we live in. If it should ever be totally extinguished, the loss I fear will be great. It is this which has given its character to modern Europe. It is this which has distinguished it under all its forms of government, and distinguished it to its advantage, from the states of Asia, and possibly from those states which flourished in the most brilliant periods of the antique world. It was this, which, without confounding ranks, had produced a noble equality, and handed it down through all the gradations of social life. It was this opinion which mitigated kings into companions, and raised private men to be fellows with kings. Without force, or opposition, it subdued the fierceness of pride and power; it obliged sovereigns to

submit to the soft collar of social esteem, compelled stern authority to submit to elegance, and gave a dominating vanquisher of laws, to be subdued by manners.

But now all is to be changed. All the pleasing illusions, which made power gentle and obedience liberal, which harmonized the different shades of life, and which, by a bland assimilation, incorporated into politics the sentiments which beautify and soften private society, are to be dissolved by this new conquering empire of light and reason. All the decent drapery of life is to be rudely torn off. All the superadded ideas, furnished from the wardrobe of a moral imagination, which the heart owns and the understanding ratifies as necessary to cover the defects of our naked, shivering nature, and to raise it to dignity in our own estimation, are to be exploded as a ridiculous, absurd, and antiquated fashion.—*Reflections on the Revolution in France.*

### 3. On the death of his Son.

HAD it pleased God to continue to me the hopes of succession, I should have been, according to my mediocrity, and the mediocrity of the age I live in, a sort of founder of a family: I should have left a son, who, in all the points in which personal merit can be viewed, in science, in erudition, in genius, in taste, in honour, in generosity, in humanity, in every liberal sentiment, and every liberal accomplishment, would not have shewn himself inferior to the Duke of Bedford, or to any of those whom he traces in his line. His Grace very soon would have wanted all plausibility in his attack upon that provision which belonged more to mine than to me. He would soon have supplied every deficiency, and symmetrized every disproportion. It would not have been for that successor to resort to any stagnant wasting

reservoir of merit in me, or in any ancestry. He had in himself a salient, living spring of generous and manly action. Every day he lived he would have re-purchased the bounty of the Crown, and ten times more, if ten times more he had received. He was made a public creature ; and had no enjoyment whatever but in the performance of some duty. At this exigent moment, the loss of a finished man is not easily supplied.

But a Disposer whose power we are little able to resist, and whose wisdom it behoves us not at all to dispute, has ordained it in another manner, and (whatever my querulous weakness might suggest) a far better. The storm has gone over me ; and I lie like one of those old oaks which the late hurricane has scattered about me. I am stripped of all my honours, I am torn up by the roots, and lie prostrate on the earth ! There, and prostrate there, I most unfeignedly recognise the divine justice, and in some degree submit to it. But whilst I humble myself before God, I do not know that it is forbidden to repel the attacks of unjust and inconsiderate men. The patience of Job is proverbial. After some of the convulsive struggles of our irritable nature, he submitted himself, and repented in dust and ashes. But even so, I do not find him blamed for reprehending, and with a considerable degree of verbal asperity, those ill-natured neighbours of his, who visited his dunghill to read moral, political, and economical lectures on his misery. I am alone. I have none to meet my enemies in the gate. Indeed, my lord, I greatly deceive myself if, in this hard season, I would give a peck of refuse wheat for all that is called fame and honour in the world. This is the appetite but of a few. It is a luxury, it is a privilege, it is an indulgence for those who are at their ease. But we are all of us made to shun disgrace, as we are made to shrink from pain,

and poverty, and disease. It is an instinct; and under the direction of reason, instinct is always in the right. I live in an inverted order. They who ought to have succeeded me have gone before me. They who should have been to me as posterity are in the place of ancestors. I owe to the dearest relation (which ever must subsist in memory) that act of piety, which he would have performed to me; I owe it to him to shew that he was not descended, as the Duke of Bedford would have it, from an unworthy parent.—*Letter to a Noble Lord.*

#### 4. The Devastation of the Carnatic.

WHEN at length Hyder Ali found that he had to do with men who either would sign no convention, or whom no treaty and no signature could bind, and who were the determined enemies of human intercourse itself, he decreed to make the country possessed by these incorrigible and predestinated criminals a memorable example to mankind. He resolved, in the gloomy recesses of a mind capacious of such things, to leave the whole Carnatick an everlasting monument of vengeance, and to put perpetual desolation as a barrier between him and those, against whom the faith which holds the moral elements of the world together was no protection. He became at length so confident of his force, so collected in his might, that he made no secret whatsoever of his dreadful resolution. Having terminated his disputes with every enemy and every rival, who buried their mutual animosities in their common detestation against the creditors of the nabob of Arcot, he drew from every quarter whatever a savage ferocity could add to his new rudiments in the arts of destruction; and compounding all the materials of fury, havoc, and desolation, into one

black cloud, he hung for a while on the declivities of the mountains. Whilst the authors of all these evils were idly and stupidly gazing on this menacing meteor, which blackened all their horizon, it suddenly burst, and poured down the whole of its contents upon the plains of the Carnatick. Then ensued a scene of woe, the like of which no eye had seen, no heart conceived, and which no tongue can adequately tell. All the horrors of war before known or heard of, were mercy to that new havoc. A storm of universal fire blasted every field, consumed every house, destroyed every temple. The miserable inhabitants flying from their flaming villages, in part were slaughtered; others, without regard to sex, to age, to the respect of rank, or sacredness of function, fathers torn from children, husbands from wives, enveloped in a whirlwind of cavalry, and amidst the goading spears of drivers, and the trampling of pursuing horses, were swept into captivity, in an unknown and hostile land. Those who were able to evade this tempest, fled to the walled cities. But escaping from fire, sword, and exile, they fell into the jaws of famine.

The alms of the settlement, in this dreadful exigency, were certainly liberal; and all was done by charity that private charity could do; but it was a people in beggary; it was a nation which stretched out its hands for food. For months together these creatures of sufferance, whose very excess and luxury in their most plenteous days had fallen short of the allowance of our austere fasts, silent, patient, resigned, without sedition or disturbance, almost without complaint, perished by an hundred a day in the streets of Madras; every day seventy at least laid their bodies in the streets, or on the glacis of Tanjore, and expired of famine in the granary of India. I was going to awake your justice towards this unhappy part of our fellow-citizens, by bringing

before you some of the circumstances of this plague of hunger. Of all the calamities which beset and waylay the life of man, this comes the nearest to our hear-, and is that wherein the proudest of us all feels himself to be nothing more than he is: but I find myself unable to manage it with decorum; these details are of a species of horror so nauseous and disgusting; they are so degrading to the sufferers and to the hearers; they are so humiliating to human nature itself, that, on better thoughts, I find it more advisable to throw a pall over this hideous object, and to leave it to your general conceptions.—*Speech on the Nabob of Arcot's Debts*, 1785.

#### 5. Charles James Fox.

AND now, having done my duty to the bill, let me say a word to the author. I should leave him to his own noble sentiments, if the unworthy and illiberal language with which he has been treated, beyond all example of parliamentary liberty, did not make a few words necessary; not so much in justice to him, as to my own feelings. I must say then, that it will be a distinction honourable to the age, that the rescue of the greatest number of the human race that ever were so grievously oppressed, from the greatest tyranny that was ever exercised, has fallen to the lot of abilities and dispositions equal to the task; that it has fallen to one who has the enlargement to comprehend, the spirit to undertake, and the eloquence to support, so great a measure of hazardous benevolence. His spirit is not owing to his ignorance of the state of men and things; he well knows what snares are spread about his path, from personal animosity, from court intrigues, and possibly from popular delusion. But he has put to hazard his ease, his



security, his interest, his power, even his darling popularity, for the benefit of a people whom he has never seen. This is the road that all heroes have trod before him. He is traduced and abused for his supposed motives. He will remember, that obloquy is a necessary ingredient in the composition of all true glory: he will remember, that it was not only in the Roman customs, but it is in the nature and constitution of things, that calumny and abuse are essential parts of triumph. These thoughts will support a mind, which only exists for honour, under the burthen of temporary reproach. He is doing indeed a great good; such as rarely falls to the lot, and almost as rarely coincides with the desires, of any man. Let him use his time. Let him give the whole length of the reins to his benevolence. He is now on a great eminence, where the eyes of mankind are turned to him. He may live long, he may do much. But here is the summit. He never can exceed what he does this day.

He has faults; but they are faults that, though they may in a small degree tarnish the lustre, and sometimes impede the march, of his abilities, have nothing in them to extinguish the fire of great virtues. In those faults, there is no mixture of deceit, of hypocrisy, of pride, of ferocity, of complexional despotism, or want of feeling for the distresses of mankind. His are faults which might exist in a descendant of Henry the Fourth of France, as they did exist in that father of his country. Henry the Fourth wished that he might live to see a fowl in the pot of every peasant in his kingdom. That sentiment of homely benevolence was worth all the splendid sayings that are recorded of kings. But he wished perhaps for more than could be obtained, and the goodness of the man exceeded the power of the king. But this gentleman, a subject, may this day

say this at least, with truth, that he secures the rice in his pot to every man in India. A poet of antiquity thought it one of the first distinctions to a prince whom he meant to celebrate, that through a long succession of generations, he had been the progenitor of an able and virtuous citizen, who by force of the arts of peace, had corrected governments of oppression, and suppressed wars of rapine.

*Indole proh quanta juvenis, quantumque daturus  
Ausoniae populis ventura in saecula civem.  
Ille super Gangem, super exauditus et Indos,  
Implebit terras voce; et furialia bella  
Fulmine compescet linguae.——*

This was what was said of the predecessor of the only person to whose eloquence it does not wrong that of the mover of this bill to be compared. But the Ganges and the Indus are the patrimony of the fame of my honourable friend, and not of Cicero. I confess, I anticipate with joy the reward of those, whose whole consequence, power, and authority, exist only for the benefit of mankind; and I carry my mind to all the people, and all the names and descriptions, that, relieved by this bill, will bless the labours of this Parliament, and the confidence which the best House of Commons has given to him who the best deserves it. The little cavils of party will not be heard, where freedom and happiness will be felt. There is not a tongue, a nation, or religion in India, which will not bless the presiding care and manly beneficence of this house, and of him who proposes to you this great work. Your names will never be separated before the throne of the Divine Goodness, in whatever language, or with whatever rites, pardon is asked for sin, and reward for those who imitate the Godhead in His universal bounty to His creatures. These honours you deserve, and they will surely be paid, when

all the jargon of influence, and party, and patronage, are swept into oblivion.

I have spoken what I think, and what I feel, of the mover of this bill. An honourable friend of mine, speaking of his merits, was charged with having made a studied panegyric. I don't know what his was. Mine, I am sure, is a studied panegyric; the fruit of much meditation; the result of the observation of near twenty years. For my own part, I am happy that I have lived to see this day; I feel myself overpaid for the labours of eighteen years, when, at this late period, I am able to take my share, by one humble vote, in destroying a tyranny that exists to the disgrace of this nation, and the destruction of so large a part of the human species.—*Speech on Mr. Fox's East India Bill, 1783.*

#### 6. On his Retirement previous to the General Election.

WHEN we know, that the opinions of even the greatest multitudes are the standard of rectitude, I shall think myself obliged to make those opinions the masters of my conscience. But if it may be doubted whether Omnipotence itself is competent to alter the essential constitution of right and wrong, sure I am, that such *things*, as they and I, are possessed of no such power. No man carries further than I do the policy of making government pleasing to the people. But the widest range of this politic complaisance is confined within the limits of justice. I would not only consult the interest of the people, but I would cheerfully gratify their humours. We are all a sort of children that must be soothed and managed. I think I am not austere or formal in my nature. I would bear, I would even myself play my part in any innocent buffooneries,

to divert them. But I never will act the tyrant for their amusement. If they will mix malice in their sports, I shall never consent to throw them any living, sentient creature whatsoever, no, not so much as a kitling, to torment.

‘But if I profess all this impolitic stubbornness, I may chance never to be elected into parliament.’ It is certainly not pleasing to be put out of the public service. But I wish to be a member of parliament, to have my share of doing good and resisting evil. It would therefore be absurd to renounce my objects, in order to obtain my seat. I deceive myself indeed most grossly, if I had not much rather pass the remainder of my life hidden in the recesses of the deepest obscurity, feeding my mind even with the visions and imaginations of such things, than to be placed on the most splendid throne of the universe, tantalized with a denial of the practice of all which can make the greatest situation any other than the greatest curse. Gentlemen, I have had my day. I can never sufficiently express my gratitude to you for having set me in a place, wherein I could lend the slightest help to great and laudable designs. If I have had my share in any measure giving quiet to private property and private conscience; if by my vote I have aided in securing to families the best possession, peace; if I have joined in reconciling kings to their subjects, and subjects to their prince; if I have assisted to loosen the foreign holdings of the citizen, and taught him to look for his protection to the laws of his country, and for his comfort to the good-will of his countrymen;—if I have thus taken my part with the best of men in the best of their actions, I can shut the book;—I might wish to read a page or two more—but this is enough for my measure.—I have not lived in vain.

And now, gentlemen, on this serious day, when I come, as it were, to make up my account with you, let me take to myself some degree of honest pride on the nature of the charges that are against me. I do not here stand before you accused of venality, or of neglect of duty. It is not said, that, in the long period of my service, I have in a single instance sacrificed the slightest of your interests to my ambition, or to my fortune. It is not alleged, that to gratify any anger or revenge of my own, or of my party, I have had a share in wronging or oppressing any description of men, or any one man in any description. No! the charges against me are all of one kind, that I have pushed the principles of general justice and benevolence too far; further than a cautious policy would warrant; and further than the opinions of many would go along with me.—In every accident which may happen through life, in pain, in sorrow, in depression, and distress—I will call to mind this accusation; and be comforted.—*Speech to the Electors of Bristol, 1780.*

## 7. Lord Chatham.

ANOTHER scene was opened, and other actors appeared on the stage. The state, in the condition I have described it, was delivered into the hands of lord Chatham—a great and celebrated name; a name that keeps the name of this country respectable in every other on the globe. It may be truly called,

Clarum et venerabile nomen  
Gentibus, multum et nostrae quod proderat urbi.

Sir, the venerable age of this great man, his merited rank, his superior eloquence, his splendid qualities, his eminent services, the vast space he fills in the eye of mankind; and,

more than all the rest, his fall from power, which, like death, canonizes and sanctifies a great character, will not suffer me to censure any part of his conduct. I am afraid to flatter him; I am sure I am not disposed to blame him. Let those, who have betrayed him by their adulation, insult him with their malevolence. But what I do not presume to censure, I may have leave to lament. For a wise man, he seemed to me at that time to be governed too much by general maxims. I speak with the freedom of history, and I hope without offence. One or two of these maxims, flowing from an opinion not the most indulgent to our unhappy species, and surely a little too general, led him into measures that were greatly mischievous to himself; and for that reason, among others, perhaps fatal to his country; measures, the effects of which, I am afraid, are for ever incurable. He made an administration, so chequered and speckled; he put together a piece of joinery, so crossly indented and whimsically dove-tailed; a cabinet so variously inlaid; such a piece of diversified Mosaic; such a tessellated pavement without cement; here a bit of black stone, and there a bit of white; patriots and courtiers, king's friends and republicans; whigs and tories; treacherous friends and open enemies: that it was indeed a very curious show; but utterly unsafe to touch, and unsure to stand on. The colleagues whom he had assorted at the same boards, stared at each other, and were obliged to ask, 'Sir, your name?—Sir, you have the advantage of me—Mr. Such-a-one—I beg a thousand pardons—' I venture to say, it did so happen, that persons had a single office, divided between them, who had never spoke to each other in their lives; until they found themselves, they knew not how, pigging together, heads and points, in the same truckle-bed.

Sir, in consequence of this arrangement, having put so much the larger part of his enemies and opposers into power, the confusion was such, that his own principles could not possibly have any effect or influence in the conduct of affairs. If ever he fell into a fit of the gout, or if any other cause withdrew him from public cares, principles directly the contrary were sure to predominate. When he had executed his plan, he had not an inch of ground to stand upon. When he had accomplished his scheme of administration, he was no longer a minister.

When his face was hid but for a moment, his whole system was on a wide sea, without chart or compass. The gentlemen, his particular friends, who, with the names of various departments of ministry, were admitted to seem as if they acted a part under him, with a modesty that becomes all men, and with a confidence in him, which was justified even in its extravagance by his superior abilities, had never, in any instance, presumed upon any opinion of their own. Deprived of his guiding influence, they were whirled about, the sport of every gust, and easily driven into any port; and as those who joined with them in manning the vessel were the most directly opposite to his opinions, measures, and character, and far the most artful and most powerful of the set, they easily prevailed, so as to seize upon the vacant, unoccupied, and derelict minds of his friends: and instantly they turned the vessel wholly out of the course of his policy. As if it were to insult as well as to betray him, even long before the close of the first session of his administration, when every thing was publicly transacted, and with great parade, in his name, they made an act, declaring it highly just and expedient to raise a revenue in America. For even then, Sir, even before this splendid orb was entirely

set, and while the western horizon was in a blaze with his descending glory, on the opposite quarter of the heavens arose another luminary, and, for his hour, became lord of the ascendant.

This light too is passed and set for ever.—*Speech on American Taxation, 1774.*

### 8. A Peroration.

My Lords, I have done; the part of the Commons is concluded. With a trembling solicitude we consign this product of our long, long labours, to your charge. Take it!—take it! It is a sacred trust. Never before was a cause of such magnitude submitted to any human tribunal.

My Lords, at this awful close, in the name of the Commons, and surrounded by them, I attest the retiring, I attest the advancing generations, between which, as a link in the great chain of eternal order, we stand.—We call this nation, we call the world to witness, that the Commons have shrunk from no labour; that we have been guilty of no prevarication; that we have made no compromise with crime; that we have not feared any odium whatsoever, in the long warfare which we have carried on with the crimes—with the vices—with the exorbitant wealth—with the enormous and overpowering influence of Eastern corruption. This war, my Lords, we have waged for twenty-two years, and the conflict has been fought at your Lordships' bar for the last seven years. My Lords, twenty-two years is a great space in the scale of the life of man; it is no inconsiderable space in the history of a great nation. A business which has so long occupied the councils and the tribunals of Great Britain, cannot possibly be huddled over in the course of vulgar, trite, and transitory events. Nothing but



some of those great revolutions, that break the traditionary chain of human memory, and alter the very face of nature itself, can possibly obscure it. My Lords, we are all elevated to a degree of importance by it; the meanest of us will, by means of it, more or less, become the concern of posterity; if we are yet to hope for such a thing in the present state of the world, as a recording, retrospective, civilised posterity; but this is in the hands of the great Disposer of events; it is not ours to settle how it shall be. My Lords, your House yet stands; it stands as a great edifice; but let me say, that it stands in the midst of ruins; in the midst of the ruins, that have been made by the greatest moral earthquake that ever convulsed and shattered this globe of ours. My Lords, it has pleased Providence to place us in such a state, that we appear every moment to be upon the verge of some great mutations. There is one thing, and one thing only, which defies all mutation; that which existed before the world, and will survive the fabric of the world itself; I mean justice; that justice, which, emanating from the Divinity, has a place in the breast of every one of us, given us for our guide with regard to ourselves, and with regard to others, and which will stand, after this globe is burned to ashes, our advocate or our accuser before the great Judge, when He comes to call upon us for the tenor of a well-spent life.

My Lords, the Commons will share in every fate with your Lordships; there is nothing sinister which can happen to you, in which we shall not be involved; and if it should so happen that we shall be subjected to some of those frightful changes, which we have seen; if it should happen that your Lordships, stripped of all the decorous distinctions of human society, should, by hands at once base and cruel,

be led to those scaffolds and machines of murder, upon which great kings and glorious queens have shed their blood, amidst the prelates, amidst the nobles, amidst the magistrates, who supported their thrones, may you in those moments feel that consolation which I am persuaded they felt in the critical moments of their dreadful agony! . . .

My Lords, if you must fall, may you so fall! but if you stand, and stand I trust you will, together with the fortune of this ancient monarchy—together with the ancient laws and liberties of this great and illustrious kingdom, may you stand as unimpeached in honour as in power; may you stand, not as a substitute for virtue, but as an ornament of virtue, as a security for virtue; may you stand long, and long stand the terror of tyrants; may you stand the refuge of afflicted nations; may you stand a sacred temple, for the perpetual residence of an inviolable Justice.—*Speech in the impeachment of Warren Hastings, 1794.*

## XLIV.

### WILLIAM COWPER.

1731-1800.

WILLIAM COWPER was born in 1731. The death of his mother when he was only six years old deprived him of the care which was needed for the well-being of a delicate and sensitive child; his recollections of this early sorrow are commemorated in one of the most beautiful of his minor poems. He was sent after her death to a private school at Market Street, whence he was removed at the end of two years because of an affection of his sight. At ten years of age he was sent to Westminster, where he continued until he was eighteen. Though he excelled in some youthful sports, and was therefore likely to have been popular with his companions, he appears to have suffered much both at Market Street and at Westminster from the tyranny of his school-fellows, and ever after retained the strongest aversion to any but home education. On leaving Westminster he was articled for three years to a solicitor—his fellow pupil in the office being the future Lord Thurloe. In 1754 he was called to the bar, and resided in the Temple for eleven years. During those years Cowper mixed in the literary society of the day, and had considerable success both as a wit and as the author of various fugitive pieces. Several lucrative offices were obtained for him by the interest of friends, but each one of these in succession was found to require some public appearance, for which his nervous temperament disqualified him. In his last attempt to face an ordeal of the kind he broke down, became insane, and was placed in confinement for eighteen months. He now withdrew from London, and settled at Huntingdon, where he became the friend and soon the inmate of the

family of the Unwins, with whom, there and at Olney, and afterwards at Weston, he found a home for the remainder of his days. Cowper suffered through life from the nervous melancholy which so often defeated his purposes in youth, and which at times amounted to insanity. He died in 1800.

Cowper was the author of *Table Talk*, *Excitation*, *The Task*, and other poems, besides Hymns contributed to the Olney collection, and translations of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. His prose writings consist chiefly of letters written to various friends, to whom he was deeply attached. He lived in extreme retirement in the bosom of the religious family with whom, as has been already said, he had made his home, and his letters touch upon such subjects as naturally belong to a quiet and contemplative life; they abound in religious meditations, in descriptions of domestic scenes, and in disclosures of his own feelings and states of mind, besides occasional allusions to his own peculiar trials. Political reflections occasionally occur, given with the modesty of a secluded observer. There is a good deal of literary criticism, especially in later years when he is himself engaged in writing, and when comments upon his own poetry are coming in from the world without. The letters are a perfect pattern of a natural, simple, and refined epistolary style, the gentleness and playfulness of which could only belong to one who was writing for no eye but that of his friend, and without a thought of publication.

### 1. His Life at Olney.

I LIVE in a world abounding with incidents, upon which many grave, and perhaps some profitable observations might be made; but those incidents never reaching my unfortunate ears, both the entertaining narrative and the reflection it might suggest are to me annihilated and lost. I look back to the past week, and say, what did it produce? I ask the same question of the week preceding, and duly receive the

same answer from both,—nothing!—A situation like this, in which I am as unknown to the world, as I am ignorant of all that passes in it, in which I have nothing to do but to think, would exactly suit me, were my subjects of meditation as agreeable as my leisure is uninterrupted. My passion for retirement is not at all abated, after so many years spent in the most sequestered state, but rather increased;—a circumstance I should esteem wonderful to a degree not to be accounted for, considering the condition of my mind, did I not know, that we think as we are made to think, and of course approve and prefer, as Providence, who appoints the bounds of our habitation, chooses for us. Thus am I both free and a prisoner at the same time. The world is before me; I am not shut up in the Bastille; there are no moats about my castle, no locks upon my gates, of which I have not the key;—but an invisible, uncontrollable agency, a local attachment, an inclination more forcible than I ever felt, even to the place of my birth, serves me for prison-walls, and for bounds which I cannot pass. In former years I have known sorrow, and before I had ever tasted of spiritual trouble. The effect was an abhorrence of the scene in which I had suffered so much, and a weariness of those objects which I had so long looked at with an eye of despondency and dejection. But it is otherwise with me now. The same cause subsisting, and in a much more powerful degree, fails to produce its natural effect. The very stones in the garden-walls are my intimate acquaintance. I should miss almost the minutest object, and be disagreeably affected by its removal, and am persuaded that were it possible I could leave this incommodious nook for a twelvemonth, I should return to it again with rapture, and be transported with the sight of objects which to all the world beside would be at least indifferent; some of them perhaps, such as the ragged

thatch and the tottering walls of the neighbouring cottages, disgusting. But so it is, and it is so, because here is to be my abode, and because such is the appointment of Him that placed me in it.—

Iste terrarum mihi praefer omnes  
Angulus ridet.

It is the place of all the world I love the most, not for any happiness it affords me, but because here I can be miserable with most convenience to myself and with the least disturbance to others.—*Letter to Rev. J. Newton.*

## 2. Time an Enemy and a Friend.

It costs me not much difficulty to suppose that my friends who were already grown old when I saw them last, are old still ; but it costs me a good deal sometimes to think of those who were at that time young, as being older than they were. Not having been an eye-witness of the change that time has made in them, and my former idea of them not being corrected by observation, it remains the same ; my memory presents me with this image unimpaired, and while it retains the resemblance of what they were, forgets that by this time the picture may have lost much of its likeness, through the alteration that succeeding years have made in the original. I know not what impressions Time may have made upon your person, for while his claws, (as our grannams called them) strike deep furrows in some faces, he seems to sheath them with much tenderness, as if fearful of doing injury to others. But though an enemy to the person, he is a friend to the mind, and you have found him so. Though even in this respect his treatment of us depends upon what he meets with at our hands ; if we use him well, and listen to his

admonitions, he is a friend indeed, but otherwise the worst of enemies, who takes from us daily something that we valued, and gives us nothing better in its stead. It is well with them who, like you, can stand a tiptoe on the mountain top of human life, look down with pleasure upon the valley they have passed, and sometimes stretch their wings in joyful hope of a happy flight into eternity. Yet a little while, and your hope will be accomplished.—*Letter to Mrs. Cowper.*

### 3. His two Goldfinches.

I HAVE two goldfinches, which in the summer occupy the greenhouse. A few days since, being employed in cleaning out their cages, I placed that which I had in hand upon the table, while the other hung against the wall: the windows and the doors stood wide open. I went to fill the fountain at the pump, and on my return was not a little surprised to find a goldfinch sitting on the top of the cage I had been cleaning, and singing to and kissing the goldfinch within. I approached him, and he discovered no fear; still nearer, and he discovered none. I advanced my hand towards him, and he took no notice of it. I seized him, and supposed I had caught a new bird, but casting my eye upon the other cage perceived my mistake. Its inhabitant, during my absence, had contrived to find an opening, where the wire had been a little bent, and made no other use of the escape it afforded him, than to salute his friend, and to converse with him more intimately than he had done before. I returned him to his proper mansion, but in vain. In less than a minute he had thrust his little person through the aperture again, and again perched upon his neighbour's cage, kissing him, as at the first, and singing, as if transported with the fortunate adventure. I could not but respect such friendship, as for the

sake of its gratification had twice declined an opportunity to be free, and, consenting to their union, resolved that for the future one cage should hold them both. I am glad of such incidents; for at a pinch, and when I need entertainment, the versification of them serves to divert me.—*Letter to Rev. W. Unwin.*

#### 4. Occupations of Life before the Flood.

LET our station be as retired as it may, there is no want of playthings and avocations, nor much need to seek them in this world of ours. Business, or what presents itself to us under that imposing character, will find us out, even in the stillest retreat, and pleads its importance, however trivial in reality, as a just demand upon our attention. It is wonderful how, by means of such real or seeming necessities, my time is stolen away. I have just time to observe that time is short, and by the time I have made the observation, time is gone. I have wondered in former days at the patience of the antediluvian world, that they could endure a life almost millenary, with so little variety as seems to have fallen to their share. It is probable that they had much fewer employments than we. Their affairs lay in a narrower compass; their libraries were indifferently furnished; philosophical researches were carried on with much less industry and acuteness of penetration, and fiddles, perhaps, were not even invented. How could these seven or eight hundred years of life be supportable? I have asked this question formerly and been at a loss to resolve it; but I think I can answer it now. I will suppose myself born a thousand years before Noah was born or thought of. I rise with the sun; I worship; I prepare my breakfast; I swallow a bucket of goat's-milk, and a dozen good sizeable cakes. I fasten a new string to my



bow, and my youngest boy, a lad of about thirty years of age, having played with my arrows till he has stript off all the feathers, I find myself obliged to repair them. The morning is thus spent in preparing for the chace, and it is become necessary that I should dine. I dig up my roots; I wash them; I boil them; I find them not done enough, I boil them again; my wife is angry; we dispute; we settle the point; but in the mean time the fire goes out, and must be kindled again. All this is very amusing. I hunt; I bring home the prey; with the skin of it I mend an old coat, or I make a new one. By this time the day is far spent; I feel myself fatigued, and retire to rest. Thus, what with tilling the ground, and eating the fruit of it, hunting, and walking, and running, and mending old clothes, and sleeping and rising again, I can suppose an inhabitant of the primæval world so much occupied as to sigh over the shortness of life, and to find, at the end of many centuries, that they had all slipt through his fingers, and were passed away like a shadow. What wonder then that I, who live in a day of so much greater refinement, when there is so much more to be wanted, and wished, and to be enjoyed, should feel myself now and then pinched in point of opportunity, and at some loss for leisure to fill four sides of a sheet like this? Thus, however, it is, and, if the ancient gentlemen to whom I have referred, and their complaints of the disproportion of time to the occasions they had for it, will not serve me as an excuse, I must even plead guilty, and confess that I am often in haste, when I have no good reason for being so.—*Letter to Rev. J. Newton.*

### 5. Public and Private Education.

You have anticipated one of my arguments in favour of a private education, therefore I need say but little about it.

The folly of supposing that the mother-tongue, in some respects the most difficult of all tongues, may be acquired without a teacher, is predominant in all the public schools that I have ever heard of. To pronounce it well, to speak and to write it with fluency and elegance, are no easy attainments; not one in fifty of those who pass through Westminster and Eton, arrive at any remarkable proficiency in these accomplishments; and they that do are more indebted to their own study and application for it, than to any instruction received there. In general, there is nothing so pedantic as the style of a schoolboy, if he aims at any style at all; and if he does not, he is of course inelegant, and perhaps ungrammatical. A defect, no doubt, in great measure owing to the want of cultivation; for the same lad that is often commended for his Latin, frequently would deserve to be whipped for his English, if the fault were not more his master's than his own. I know not where this evil is so likely to be prevented as at home,—supposing always, nevertheless, that the boy's parents, and their acquaintance, are persons of elegance and taste themselves. For to converse with those who converse with propriety, and to be directed to such authors as have refined and improved the language by their productions, are advantages which he cannot elsewhere enjoy in an equal degree. And though it requires some time to regulate the taste, and fix the judgment, and these defects must be gradually wrought even upon the best understanding, yet I suppose much less time will be necessary for the purpose than could at first be imagined, because the opportunities of improvement are continual. . . .

A public education is often recommended as the most effectual remedy for that bashful and awkward constraint, so epidemical among the youth of our country. But I

verily believe that instead of being a cure, it is often the cause of it. For seven or eight years of his life, the boy has hardly seen or conversed with a man, or a woman, except the maids at his boarding house. A gentleman or a lady are consequently such novelties to him, that he is perfectly at a loss to know what sort of behaviour he should preserve before them. He plays with his buttons, or the strings of his hat, he blows his nose, and hangs down his head, is conscious of his own deficiency to a degree that makes him quite unhappy, and trembles lest any one should speak to him, because that would quite overwhelm him. Is not all this miserable shyness evidently the effect of his education? To me it appears to be so. If he saw good company every day, he would never be terrified at the sight of it, and a room full of ladies and gentlemen would alarm him no more than the chairs they sit on. Such is the effect of custom. . . .

Connexions formed at school are said to be lasting, and often beneficial. There are two or three stories of this kind upon record, which would not be so constantly cited as they are, whenever this subject happens to be mentioned, if the chronicle that preserves their remembrance had many besides to boast of. For my own part, I found such friendships, though warm enough in their commencement, surprisingly liable to extinction; and of seven or eight, whom I had selected for intimates out of about three hundred, in ten years time not one was left me. The truth is, that there may be, and often is, an attachment of one boy to another, that looks very like a friendship; and while they are in circumstances that enable them mutually to oblige and to assist each other, promises well, and bids fair to be lasting. But they are no sooner separated from each other, by entering into the world at large, than other connexions,

and new employments, in which they no longer share together, efface the remembrance of what passed in earlier days, and they become strangers to each other for ever. Add to this, that the *man* frequently differs so much from the *boy*,—his principles, manners, temper, and conduct undergo so great an alteration,—that we no longer recognise in him our old playfellow, but find him utterly unworthy and unfit for the place he once held in our affections.—*Letter to Rev. W. Unwin.*

### 6. Johnson's Lives of the Poets.

I AM very much the biographer's humble admirer. His uncommon share of good sense, and his forcible expression, secure to him that tribute from all his readers. He has a penetrating insight into character, and a happy talent of correcting the popular opinion, upon all occasions where it is erroneous; and this he does with the boldness of a man who will think for himself, but, at the same time, with a justness of sentiment that convinces us he does not differ from others through affectation, but because he has a sounder judgment. This remark, however, has his narrative for its object, rather than his critical performance. In the latter, I do not think him always just, when he departs from the general opinion. He finds no beauties in Milton's *Lycidas*. . . . His treatment of Milton is unmerciful to the last degree. A pensioner is not likely to spare a republican; and the Doctor, in order, I suppose, to convince his royal patron of the sincerity of his monarchical principles, has belaboured that great poet's character with the most industrious cruelty. As a man, he has hardly left him the shadow of one good quality. Churlishness in his private life, and a rancorous hatred of every thing royal in his

public, are the two colours with which he has smeared all the canvas. If he had any virtues, they are not to be found in the Doctor's picture of him; and it is well for Milton, that some sourness in his temper is the only vice with which his memory has been charged; it is evident enough that if his biographer could have discovered more, he would not have spared him. As a poet, he has treated him with severity enough, and has plucked one or two of the most beautiful feathers out of his Muse's wing, and trampled them under his great foot. He has passed sentence of condemnation upon Lycidas, and has taken occasion, from that charming poem, to expose to ridicule, (what is indeed ridiculous enough,) the childish prattlement of pastoral compositions, as if Lycidas was the prototype and pattern of them all. The liveliness of the description, the sweetness of the numbers, the classical spirit of antiquity that prevails in it, go for nothing. I am convinced by the way, that he has no ear for poetical numbers, or that it was stopped by prejudice against the harmony of Milton's. Was there ever any thing so delightful as the music of the *Paradise Lost*? It is like that of a fine organ; has the fullest and the deepest tones of majesty, with all the softness and elegance of the Dorian flute. Variety without end and never equalled, unless perhaps by Virgil. Yet the Doctor has little or nothing to say upon this copious theme, but talks something about the unfitness of the English language for blank verse, and how apt it is, in the mouth of some readers, to degenerate into declamation. Oh! I could thresh his old jacket, till I made his pension jingle in his pocket. . . .

•  
He pours contempt upon Prior, to such a degree, that were he really as undeserving of notice as he represents him, he ought no longer to be numbered among the poets.

These, indeed, are the two capital instances in which he has offended me. There are others less important, which I have not room to enumerate, and in which I am less confident that he is wrong. What suggested to him the thought that the *Alma* was written in imitation of *Hudibras*, I cannot conceive. In former years, they were both favourites of mine, and I often read them; but never saw in them the least resemblance to each other; nor do I now, except that they are composed in verse of the same measure. After all, it is a melancholy observation, which it is impossible not to make, after having run through this series of poetical lives, that where there were such shining talents, there should be so little virtue. These luminaries of our country seem to have been kindled into a brighter blaze than others, only that their spots might be more noticed! So much can nature do for our intellectual part, and so little for our moral. What vanity, what petulance in Pope! How painfully sensible of censure, and yet how restless in provocation! To what mean artifices could Addison stoop, in hopes of injuring the reputation of his friend! Savage, how sordidly vicious, and the more condemned for the pains that are taken to palliate his vices. Offensive as they appear through a veil, how would they disgust without one. What a sycophant to the public taste was Dryden; sinning against his feelings, lewd in his writings, though chaste in his conversation. I know not but one might search these eight volumes with a candle, as the prophet says, to find a man, and not find one, unless, perhaps, Arbuthnot were he.—*Letter to Rev. W. Unwin.*

## XLV.

### EDWARD GIBBON.

1737-1794.

EDWARD GIBBON was born in 1737 at Putney, in Surrey, of a respectable and ancient family. His school education both at Kingston and afterwards at Westminster was interrupted by ill health, and his mother being dead he was indebted to a maiden aunt for the fostering care which soothed the pain and languor of a sickly and suffering childhood by the voice of instruction and amusement. 'She was,' Gibbon says, 'the true mother of my mind as well as of my health, and to her kind lessons I ascribe my early and invincible love of reading, which I would not exchange for the treasures of India.'

At fifteen Gibbon entered Magdalen College. To Oxford, for the fourteen months he resided there—'the most idle and unprofitable of my whole life'—Gibbon would acknowledge no obligation, and denied that his tender age, imperfect preparation, and hasty departure should bear the blame of his failure, rather than the absence of discipline, restraint, and due instruction with which he reproached his Alma Mater. At sixteen Gibbon was converted to Catholicism, but returned to Protestantism in the following year, under the guidance of a Calvinist minister at Lausanne, to whose tutelage his father had consigned him. He remained for five years at Lausanne, employed in diligent and happy study, and acquiring the mastery of the French tongue, for which he was afterwards remarkable; in that language his first works were published. On his return to England in 1758, he entered the militia, and engaged for four years in military duties, but without relinquishing his studies. His *Essai sur l'étude de la Littérature*

appeared at this time. In 1763 he returned to the continent, revisiting Lausanne, and travelling for the first time in Italy. After two years he again settled in England, resuming his service in the militia and his literary pursuits. He published two volumes of *Mémoires Littéraires sur la Grande Bretagne*, and entered into a controversy with Warburton respecting the true interpretation of the Sixth Book of the *Æneid*. His father's death in 1770 left him with an independent fortune, and he entered the House of Commons, where he sat for nine years, first for the borough of Liskeard, and then, in the next Parliament, for that of Lymington. In 1783 he resigned his seat and returned to Switzerland, to devote himself to the composition of the concluding volumes of his history. He spent the greater part of his latter years at Lausanne, where he completed the great work of his life, the *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. The story of the rise and progress and conclusion of this great history is given among the extracts in Gibbon's own words. In 1793 the French Revolution drove him back to England, where he died at the house of his friend Lord Sheffield in 1794. As a master of the ornate style of English writing, Gibbon stands alone amidst British authors, while the immense extent of his knowledge places him in the first rank of historians. There is something pompous in the march of his sentences, and something laboured in his continually recurring antitheses, which a severe taste can hardly approve, but every word in him is full of meaning, and for the condensed and eloquent expression of thought and knowledge combined, he is without an equal.

### 1. The Age of the Antonines.

If a man were called to fix the period in the history of the world, during which the condition of the human race was most happy and prosperous, he would, without hesitation, name that which elapsed from the death of Domitian to the accession of Commodus. The vast extent of the



Roman empire was governed by absolute power, under the guidance of virtue and wisdom. The armies were restrained by the firm but gentle hand of four successive emperors, whose characters and authority commanded involuntary respect. The forms of the civil administration were carefully preserved by Nerva, Trajan, Hadrian, and the Antonines, who delighted in the image of liberty, and were pleased with considering themselves as the accountable ministers of the laws. Such princes deserved the honour of restoring the republic, had the Romans of their days been capable of enjoying a rational freedom.

The labours of these monarchs were overpaid by the immense reward that inseparably waited on their success; by the honest pride of virtue, and by the exquisite delight of beholding the general happiness of which they were the authors. A just but melancholy reflection embittered, however, the noblest of human enjoyments. They must often have recollected the instability of a happiness which depended on the character of a single man. The fatal moment was perhaps approaching, when some licentious youth, or some jealous tyrant, would abuse, to the destruction, that absolute power, which they had exerted for the benefit of their people. The ideal restraints of the senate and the laws might serve to display the virtues, but could never correct the vices, of the emperor. The military force was a blind and irresistible instrument of oppression; and the corruption of Roman manners would always supply flatterers eager to applaud, and ministers prepared to serve, the fear or the avarice, the lust or the cruelty, of their masters.

These gloomy apprehensions had been already justified by the experience of the Romans. The annals of the emperors exhibit a strong and various picture of human

nature, which we should vainly seek among the mixed and doubtful characters of modern history. In the conduct of those monarchs we may trace the utmost lines of vice and virtue; the most exalted perfection, and the meanest degeneracy of our own species. The golden age of Trajan and the Antonines had been preceded by an age of iron. It is almost superfluous to enumerate the unworthy successors of Augustus. Their unparalleled vices, and the splendid theatre on which they were acted, have saved them from oblivion. The dark unrelenting Tiberius, the furious Caligula, the feeble Claudius, the profligate and cruel Nero, the beastly Vitellius, and the timid inhuman Domitian, are condemned to everlasting infamy. During fourscore years (excepting only the short and doubtful respite of Vespasian's reign) Rome groaned beneath an unrelenting tyranny, which exterminated the ancient families of the republic, and was fatal to almost every virtue, and every talent, that arose in that unhappy period — *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.*

## 2. Disbelief of Paganism prevalent in the Roman World.

WHEN Christianity appeared in the world even these faint and imperfect impressions had lost much of their original power. Human reason, which by its unassisted strength is incapable of perceiving the mysteries of faith, had already obtained an easy triumph over the folly of Paganism; and when Tertullian or Lactantius employ their labours in exposing its falsehood and extravagance, they are obliged to transcribe the eloquence of Cicero or the wit of Lucian. The contagion of these sceptical writings had been diffused far beyond the number of their readers.

The fashion of incredulity was communicated from the philosopher to the man of pleasure or business, from the noble to the plebeian, and from the master to the menial slave who waited at his table, and who eagerly listened to the freedom of his conversation. On public occasions the philosophic part of mankind affected to treat with respect and decency the religious institutions of their country; but their secret contempt penetrated through the thin and awkward disguise; and even the people, when they discovered that their deities were rejected and derided by those whose rank or understanding they were accustomed to reverence, were filled with doubts and apprehensions concerning the truth of those doctrines, to which they had yielded the most implicit belief. The decline of ancient prejudice exposed a very numerous portion of human kind to the danger of a painful and comfortless situation. A state of scepticism and suspense may amuse a few inquisitive minds. But the practice of superstition is so congenial to the multitude, that if they are forcibly awakened, they still regret the loss of their pleasing vision. Their love of the marvellous and supernatural, their curiosity with regard to future events, and their strong propensity to extend their hopes and fears beyond the limits of the visible world, were the principal causes which favoured the establishment of Polytheism. So urgent on the vulgar is the necessity of believing, that the fall of any system of mythology will most probably be succeeded by the introduction of some other mode of superstition. Some deities of a more recent and fashionable cast might soon have occupied the deserted temples of Jupiter and Apollo, if, in the decisive moment, the wisdom of Providence had not interposed a genuine revelation, fitted to inspire the most rational esteem and conviction, whilst, at the same time, it was adorned with all that could attract the curiosity, the wonder, and the vener-

ation of the people. In their actual disposition, as many were almost disengaged from their artificial prejudices, but equally susceptible and desirous of a devout attachment; an object much less deserving would have been sufficient to fill the vacant place in their hearts, and to gratify the uncertain eagerness of their passions. Those who are inclined to pursue this reflection, instead of viewing with astonishment the rapid progress of Christianity, will perhaps be surprised its success was not still more rapid and still more universal.—*History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.*

### 3. The Emperor Julian.

THE throne of Julian, which the death of Constantius fixed on an independent basis, was the seat of reason, of virtue, and perhaps of vanity. He despised the honours, renounced the pleasures, and discharged with incessant diligence the duties, of his exalted station; and there were few among his subjects who would have consented to relieve him from the weight of the diadem, had they been obliged to submit their time and their actions to the rigorous laws which that philosophic emperor imposed on himself. . . . In one and the same day, he gave audience to several ambassadors, and wrote, or dictated, a great number of letters to his generals, his civil magistrates, his private friends, and the different cities of his dominions. He listened to the memorials which had been received, considered the subject of the petitions, and signified his intentions more rapidly than they could be taken in shorthand by the diligence of his secretaries. He possessed such flexibility of thought, and such firmness of attention, that he could employ his hand to write, his ear to listen, and his voice to dictate; and pursue at once three several

trains of ideas without hesitation, and without error. While his ministers reposed, the prince flew with agility from one labour to another, and, after a hasty dinner, retired into his library, till the public business, which he had appointed for the evening, summoned him to interrupt the prosecution of his studies. The supper of the emperor was still less substantial than the former meal; his sleep was never clouded by the fumes of indigestion. . . . He was soon awakened by the entrance of fresh secretaries, who had slept the preceding day; and his servants were obliged to wait alternately, while their indefatigable master allowed himself scarcely any other refreshment than the change of occupations. The predecessors of Julian, his uncle, his brother, and his cousin, indulged their puerile taste for the games of the Circus, under the specious pretence of complying with the inclinations of the people; and they frequently remained the greatest part of the day as idle spectators, and as a part of the splendid spectacle, till the ordinary round of twenty-four races was completely finished. On solemn festivals, Julian, who felt and professed an unfashionable dislike to these frivolous amusements, condescended to appear in the Circus; and after bestowing a careless glance at five or six of the races, he hastily withdrew with the impatience of a philosopher, who considered every moment as lost, that was not devoted to the advantage of the public, or the improvement of his own mind. By this avarice of time, he seemed to protract the short duration of his reign; and if the dates were less securely ascertained, we should refuse to believe that only sixteen months elapsed between the death of Constantius and the departure of his successor for the Persian war. . . .

The laborious administration of military and civil affairs.

which were multiplied in proportion to the extent of the empire, exercised the abilities of Julian; but he frequently assumed the two characters of Orator and of Judge, which are almost unknown to the modern sovereigns of Europe. The arts of persuasion, so diligently cultivated by the first Cæsars, were neglected by the military ignorance and Asiatic pride of their successors; and if they condescended to harangue the soldiers, whom they feared, they treated with silent disdain the senators, whom they despised. The assemblies of the senate, which Constantius had avoided, were considered by Julian as the place where he could exhibit, with the most propriety, the maxims of a republican, and the talents of a rhetorician. He alternately practised, as in a school of declamation, the several modes of praise, of censure, of exhortation; and his friend Libanius has remarked, that the study of Homer taught him to imitate the simple, concise style of Menelaus, the copiousness of Nestor, whose words descended like the flakes of a winter's snow, or the pathetic and forcible eloquence of Ulysses. The functions of a judge, which are sometimes incompatible with those of a prince, were exercised by Julian, not only as a duty, but as an amusement; and although he might have trusted the integrity and discernment of his Praetorian praefects, he often placed himself by their side on the seat of judgment. The acute penetration of his mind was agreeably occupied in detecting and defeating the chicanery of the advocates, who laboured to disguise the truths of facts, and to pervert the sense of the laws. He sometimes forgot the gravity of his station, asked indiscreet or unseasonable questions, and betrayed, by the loudness of his voice and the agitation of his body, the earnest vehemence with which he maintained his opinion against the judges, the advocates, and their clients. But his knowledge of his own temper

prompted him to encourage, and even to solicit, the reproof of his friends and ministers; and whenever they ventured to oppose the irregular sallies of his passions, the spectators could observe the shame, as well as the gratitude, of their monarch. The decrees of Julian were almost always founded on the principles of justice; and he had the firmness to resist the two most dangerous temptations, which assault the tribunal of a sovereign, under the specious forms of compassion and equity. He decided the merits of the cause without weighing the circumstances of the parties; and the poor, whom he wished to relieve, were condemned to satisfy the just demands of a noble and wealthy adversary. He carefully distinguished the judge from the legislator; and though he meditated a necessary reformation of the Roman jurisprudence, he pronounced sentence according to the strict and literal interpretation of those laws, which the magistrates were bound to execute, and the subjects to obey.

The generality of princes, if they were stripped of their purple, and cast naked into the world, would immediately sink to the lowest rank of society, without a hope of emerging from their obscurity. But the personal merit of Julian was, in some measure, independent of his fortune. Whatever had been his choice of life; by the force of intrepid courage, lively wit, and intense application, he would have obtained, or at least he would have deserved, the highest honours of his profession; and Julian might have raised himself to the rank of minister, or general, of the state in which he was born a private citizen. If the jealous caprice of power had disappointed his expectations; if he had prudently declined the paths of greatness, the employment of the same talents in studious solitude would have placed, beyond the reach of kings, his present

happiness and his immortal fame. When we inspect, with minute, or perhaps malevolent attention, the portrait of Julian, something seems wanting to the grace and perfection of the whole figure. His genius was less powerful and sublime than that of Cæsar; nor did he possess the consummate prudence of Augustus. The virtues of Trajan appear more steady and natural, and the philosophy of Marcus is more simple and consistent. Yet Julian sustained adversity with firmness, and prosperity with moderation. After an interval of one hundred and twenty years from the death of Alexander Severus, the Romans beheld an emperor who made no distinction between his duties and his pleasures: who laboured to relieve the distress, and to revive the spirit, of his subjects; and who endeavoured always to connect authority with merit, and happiness with virtue. Even faction, and religious faction, was constrained to acknowledge the superiority of his genius, in peace as well as in war, and to confess, with a sigh, that the apostate Julian was a lover of his country, and that he deserved the empire of the world.—*History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.*

#### 4. Mahomet.

ACCORDING to the tradition of his companions, Mahomet was distinguished by the beauty of his person, an outward gift which is seldom despised, except by those to whom it has been refused. Before he spoke, the orator engaged on his side the affections of a public or private audience. They applauded his commanding presence, his majestic aspect, his piercing eye, his gracious smile, his flowing beard, his countenance that painted every sensation of the soul, and his gestures that enforced each expression of the tongue. In the familiar offices of life he scrupulously adhered to the



grave and ceremonious politeness of his country : his respectful attention to the rich and powerful was dignified by his condescension and affability to the poorest citizens of Mecca : the frankness of his manner concealed the artifice of his views ; and the habits of courtesy were imputed to personal friendship or universal benevolence. His memory was capacious and retentive ; his wit easy and social, his imagination sublime ; his judgment clear, rapid, and decisive. He possessed the courage both of thought and action ; and, although his designs might gradually expand with his success, the first idea which he entertained of his divine mission bears the stamp of an original and superior genius. The son of Abdallah was educated in the bosom of the noblest race, in the use of the purest dialect of Arabia ; and the fluency of his speech was corrected and enhanced by the practice of discreet and seasonable silence. With these powers of eloquence, Mahomet was an illiterate Barbarian : his youth had never been instructed in the arts of reading and writing ; the common ignorance exempted him from shame or reproach, but he was reduced to a narrow circle of existence, and deprived of those faithful mirrors, which reflect to our mind the minds of sages and heroes. Yet the book of nature and of man was open to his view. . . . From his earliest youth Mahomet was addicted to religious contemplation, each year, during the month of Ramadan, he withdrew from the world, and from the arms of Cadijah : in the cave of Hira, three miles from Mecca, he consulted the spirit of fraud or enthusiasm, whose abode is not in the heavens, but in the mind of the prophet. The faith which, under the name of *Islam*, he preached to his family and nation, is compounded of an eternal truth, and a necessary fiction, THAT THERE IS ONLY ONE GOD, AND THAT MAHOMET IS THE APOSTLE OF GOD.

The first and most arduous conquests of Mahomet were those of his wife, his servant, his pupil, and his friend ; since he presented himself as a prophet to those who were most conversant with his infirmities as a man. Yet Cadijah believed the word, and cherished the glory, of her husband ; the obsequious and affectionate Zeid was tempted by the prospect of freedom ; the illustrious Ali, the son of Abu Taleb, embraced the sentiments of his cousin with the spirit of a youthful hero ; and the wealth, the moderation, the veracity of Abubeker, confirmed the religion of the prophet whom he was destined to succeed. By his persuasion, ten of the most respectable citizens of Mecca were introduced to the private lessons of Islam ; they yielded to the voice of reason and enthusiasm ; they repeated the fundamental creed ; ' There is but one God, and Mahomet is the apostle of God ' ; and their faith, even in this life, was rewarded with riches and honours, with the command of armies and the government of kingdoms. Three years were silently employed in the conversion of fourteen proselytes, the first fruits of his mission ; but in the fourth year he assumed the prophetic office. . . .

The people of Mecca were hardened in their unbelief by superstition and envy. The elders of the city, the uncles of the prophet, affected to despise the presumption of an orphan, the reformer of his country ; . . . and the prophet withdrew himself to various places of strength in the town and country. As he was still supported by his family, the rest of the tribe of Koreish engaged themselves to renounce all intercourse with the children of Hashem, neither to buy nor sell, neither to marry nor to give in marriage, but to pursue them with implacable enmity, till they should deliver the person of Mahomet to the justice of the gods. The decree was suspended in the Caaba before the eyes of the

nation; the messengers of the Koreish pursued the Musulman exiles in the heart of Africa: they besieged the prophet and his most faithful followers, intercepted their water, and inflamed their mutual animosity by the retaliation of injuries and insults. . . . His imprisonment might provoke the despair of his enthusiasm; and the exile of an eloquent and popular fanatic would diffuse the mischief through the provinces of Arabia. His death was resolved; and they agreed that a sword from each tribe should be buried in his heart, to divide the guilt of his blood, and baffle the vengeance of the Hashemites. An angel or a spy revealed their conspiracy; and flight was the only resource of Mahomet. At the dead of night, accompanied by his friend Abubeker, he silently escaped from his house: the assassins watched at the door; but they were deceived by the figure of Ali, who reposed on the bed, and was covered with the green vestment of the apostle. The Koreish respected the piety of the heroic youth; but some verses of Ali, which are still extant, exhibit an interesting picture of his anxiety, his tenderness, and his religious confidence. Three days Mahomet and his companion were concealed in the cave of Thor, at the distance of a league from Mecca; and in the close of each evening, they received, from the son and daughter of Abubeker, a secret supply of intelligence and food. The diligence of the Koreish explored every haunt in the neighbourhood of the city: they arrived at the entrance of the cavern; but the providential deceit of a spider's web and a pigeon's nest is supposed to convince them that the place was solitary and inviolate. 'We are only two,' said the trembling Abubeker. 'There is a third,' replied the prophet; 'it is God himself.' No sooner was the pursuit abated, than the two fugitives issued from the rock, and mounted their camels: on the road to Medina, they were overtaken by the emissaries of

the Koreish; they redeemed themselves with prayers and promises from their hands. In this eventful moment, the lance of an Arab might have changed the history of the world. The flight of the prophet from Mecca to Medina has fixed the memorable æra of the *Hegira*, which, at the end of twelve centuries, still discriminates the lunar years of the Mahometan nations.

The religion of the Koran might have perished in its cradle, had not Medina embraced with faith and reverence the holy outcasts of Mecca. . . .

From his establishment at Medina, Mahomet assumed the exercise of the regal and sacerdotal office; and it was impious to appeal from a judge whose decrees were inspired by the divine wisdom. A small portion of ground, the patrimony of two orphans, was acquired by gift or purchase; on that chosen spot, he built an house and a mosch more venerable in their rude simplicity than the palaces and temples of the Assyrian caliph. His seal of gold, or silver, was inscribed with the apostolic title; when he prayed and preached in the weekly assembly, he leaned against the trunk of a palm-tree; and it was long before he indulged himself in the use of a chair or pulpit of rough timber. After a reign of six years, fifteen hundred Moslems, in arms and in the field, renewed their oath of allegiance; and their chief repeated the assurance of protection till the death of the last member, or the final dissolution of the party. . . .

Till the age of sixty-three years, the strength of Mahomet was equal to the temporal and spiritual fatigues of his mission. . . . During four years, the health of the prophet declined; his infirmities increased; but his mortal disease was a fever of fourteen days, which deprived him by intervals of the use of reason. As soon as he was conscious of his danger, he edified his brethren by the humility of his virtue

or penitence. 'If there be any man,' said the apostle from the pulpit, 'whom I have unjustly scourged, I submit my own back to the lash of retaliation. Have I aspersed the reputation of a Musulman? let him proclaim *my* faults in the face of the congregation. Has any one been despoiled of his goods? the little that I possess shall compensate the principal and the interest of the debt.' 'Yes,' replied a voice from the crowd, 'I am entitled to three drams of silver.' Mahomet heard the complaint, satisfied the demand, and thanked his creditor for accusing him in this world rather than at the day of judgment. He beheld with temperate firmness the approach of death; enfranchised his slaves (seventeen men, as they are named, and eleven women); minutely directed the order of his funeral, and moderated the lamentations of his weeping friends, on whom he bestowed the benediction of peace. Till the third day before his death, he regularly performed the function of public prayer. . . . If the slightest credit may be afforded to the traditions of his wives and companions, he maintained, in the bosom of his family, and to the last moments of his life, the dignity of an apostle, and the faith of an enthusiast; described the visits of Gabriel, who bade an everlasting farewell to the earth, and expressed his lively confidence, not only of the mercy, but of the favour, of the Supreme Being. In a familiar discourse he had mentioned his special prerogative, that the angel of death was not allowed to take his soul till he had respectfully asked the permission of the prophet. The request was granted; and Mahomet immediately fell into the agony of his dissolution: his head was reclined on the lap of Ayesha, the best beloved of all his wives; he fainted with the violence of pain; recovering his spirits, he raised his eyes towards the roof of the house, and, with a steady look, though a faltering voice, uttered the last

broken, though articulate, words: 'O God! . . . . . pardon my sins. . . . . Yes, . . . . . I come, . . . . . among my fellow-citizens on high'; and thus peaceably expired on a carpet spread upon the floor. An expedition for the conquest of Syria was stopped by this mournful event: the army halted at the gates of Medina; the chiefs were assembled round their dying master. The city, more especially the house, of the prophet, was a scene of clamorous sorrow or silent despair: fanaticism alone could suggest a ray of hope and consolation. 'How can he be dead, our witness, our intercessor, our mediator, with God? By God he is not dead: like Moses and Jesus he is wrapt in a holy trance, and speedily will he return to his faithful people.' The evidence of sense was disregarded; and Omar, unsheathing his cimeter, threatened to strike off the heads of the infidels, who should dare to affirm that the prophet was no more. The tumult was appeased by the weight and moderation of Abubeker. 'Is it Mahomet,' said he to Omar and the multitude, 'or the God of Mahomet, whom you worship? The God of Mahomet liveth for ever; but the apostle was a mortal like ourselves, and according to his own prediction, he has experienced the common fate of mortality.' He was piously interred by the hands of his nearest kinsman, on the same spot on which he expired: Medina has been sanctified by the death and burial of Mahomet; and the innumerable pilgrims of Mecca often turn aside from the way, to bow, in voluntary devotion, before the simple tomb of the prophet.—*History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire.*

##### 5. The Rise, Progress, and Completion of the great Work.

My temper is not very susceptible of enthusiasm, and the enthusiasm which I do not feel, I have ever scorned to affect.

But, at the distance of twenty-five years, I can neither forget nor express the strong emotions which agitated my mind as I first approached and entered the Eternal City. After a sleepless night, I trod, with a lofty step, the ruins of the Forum; each memorable spot where Romulus stood, or Tully spoke, or Cæsar fell, was at once present to my eye; and several days of intoxication were lost or enjoyed before I could descend to a cool and minute investigation. . . .

It was at Rome, on the 15th of October, 1764, as I sat musing amidst the ruins of the Capitol, while the bare-footed friars were singing vespers in the Temple of Jupiter, that the idea of writing the decline and fall of the city first started to my mind. But my original plan was circumscribed to the decay of the city rather than of the empire: and, though my reading and reflections began to point towards that object, some years elapsed, and several avocations intervened, before I was seriously engaged in the execution of that laborious work. . . .

In 1768, I began gradually to advance from the wish to the hope, from the hope to the design, from the design to the execution, of my historical work, of whose limits and extent I had yet a very inadequate notion. The Classics, as low as Tacitus, the younger Pliny, and Juvenal, were my old and familiar companions. I insensibly plunged into the ocean of the Augustan history; and in the descending series I investigated, with my pen almost always in my hand, the original records, both Greek and Latin, from Dion Cassius to Ammianus Marcellinus, from the reign of Trajan to the last age of the Western Cæsars. The subsidiary rays of medals, and inscriptions of geography and chronology, were thrown on their proper objects; and I applied the collections of Tillemont, whose inimitable accuracy almost assumes the character of genius, to fix and arrange within my reach

the loose and scattered atoms of historical information. Through the darkness of the middle ages I explored my way in the *Annals and Antiquities of Italy* of the learned Muratori; and diligently compared them with the parallel or transverse lines of Sigonius and Maffei, Baronius and Pagi, till I almost grasped the ruins of Rome in the fourteenth century, without suspecting that this final chapter must be attained by the labour of six quartos and twenty years. Among the books which I purchased, the Theodosian Code, with the commentary of James Godefroy, must be gratefully remembered. I used it (and much I used it) as a work of history, rather than of jurisprudence: but in every light it may be considered as a full and capacious repository of the political state of the empire in the fourth and fifth centuries. As I believed, and as I still believe, that the propagation of the Gospel and the triumph of the church are inseparably connected with the decline of the Roman monarchy, I weighed the causes and effects of the revolution, and contrasted the narratives and apologies of the Christians themselves, with the glances of candour or enmity which the Pagans have cast on the rising sects. The Jewish and Heathen testimonies, as they are collected and illustrated by Dr. Lardner, directed, without superseding, my search of the originals; and in an ample dissertation on the miraculous darkness of the passion, I privately drew my conclusions from the silence of an unbelieving age. I have assembled the preparatory studies, directly or indirectly relative to my history; but, in strict equity, they must be spread beyond this period of my life, over the two summers (1771 and 1772) that elapsed between my father's death and my settlement in London. In a free conversation with books and men, it would be endless to enumerate the names and characters of all who are introduced to our acquaintance;



EDWARD GIBBON.

but in this general acquaintance we may select the degrees of friendship and esteem. According to the wise maxim, *Multum legere potius quam nulla*, I reviewed, again and again, the immortal works of the French and English, the Latin and Italian classics. My Greek studies (though less assiduous than I designed) maintained and extended my knowledge of that incomparable idiom. Homer and Xenophon were still my favourite authors; and I had almost prepared for the press an Essay on the Cyropædia, which, in my own judgment, is not unhappily laboured. . . .

No sooner was I settled in my house and library, than I undertook the composition of the first volume of my history. At the outset all was dark and doubtful; even the title of the work, the true æra of the Decline and Fall of the Empire, the limits of the introduction, the division of the chapters, and the order of the narrative; and I was often tempted to cast away the labour of seven years. The style of an author should be the image of his mind, but the choice and command of language is the fruit of exercise. Many experiments were made before I could hit the middle tone between a dull chronicle and a rhetorical declamation: three times did I compose the first chapter, and twice the second and third, before I was tolerably satisfied with their effect. In the remainder of the way I advanced with a more equal and easy pace; but the fifteenth and sixteenth chapters have been reduced by three successive revisals, from a large volume to their present size; and they might still be compressed, without any loss of facts or sentiments. An opposite fault may be imputed to the concise and superficial narrative of the first reigns from Commodus to Alexander; a fault of which I have never heard, except from Mr. Hume in his last journey to London. Such an oracle might have been consulted and obeyed with rational devotion; but I

was soon disgusted with the modest practice of reading the manuscript to my friends. Of such friends some will praise from politeness, and some will criticise from vanity. The author himself is the best judge of his own performance; no one has so deeply meditated on the subject; no one is so sincerely interested in the event. . . .

So flexible is the title of my History, that the final æra might be fixed at my own choice; and I long hesitated whether I should be content with the three volumes, the fall of the Western empire, which fulfilled my first engagement with the public. In this interval of suspense, nearly a twelvemonth, I returned by a natural impulse to the Greek authors of antiquity; I read with new pleasure the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, the *Histories* of Herodotus, Thucydides, and Xenophon, a large portion of the tragic and comic theatre of Athens and many interesting dialogues of the Socratic school. Yet in the luxury of freedom I began to wish for the daily task, the active pursuit, which gave a value to every book, and an object to every inquiry: the preface of a new edition announced my design, and I dropped without reluctance from the age of Plato to that of Justinian. The original texts of Procopius and Agathias supplied the events and even the characters of his reign: but a laborious winter was devoted to the Codes, the Pandects, and the modern interpreters, before I presumed to form an abstract of the civil law. My skill was improved by practice, my diligence perhaps was quickened by the loss of office; and, excepting the last chapter, I had finished the fourth volume before I sought a retreat on the banks of the Leman Lake. . . .

It was not till after many designs, and many trials, that I preferred, as I still prefer, the method of grouping my picture by nations; and the seeming neglect of chronological order is surely compensated by the superior merits of

interest and perspicuity. The style of the first volume is, in my opinion, somewhat crude and elaborate ; in the second and third it is ripened into ease, correctness, and numbers ; but in the three last I may have been seduced by the facility of my pen, and the constant habit of speaking one language and writing another may have infused some mixture of Gallic idioms. Happily for my eyes, I have always closed my studies with the day, and commonly with the morning ; and a long, but temperate, labour has been accomplished, without fatiguing either the mind or body ; but when I computed the remainder of my time and my task, it was apparent that, according to the season of publication, the delay of a month would be productive of that of a year. I was now straining for the goal, and in the last winter many evenings were borrowed from the social pleasures of Lausanne. I could now wish that a pause, an interval, had been allowed for a serious revisal.

I have presumed to mark the moment of conception : I shall now commemorate the hour of my final deliverance. It was on the day, or rather night, of the 27th of June 1787, between the hours of eleven and twelve, that I wrote the last lines of the last page, in a summer-house in my garden. After laying down my pen, I took several turns in a *berceau*, or covered walk of acacias, which commands a prospect of the country, the lake, and the mountains. The air was temperate, the sky was serene, the silver orb of the moon was reflected from the waters, and all nature was silent. I will not dissemble the first emotions of joy on recovery of my freedom, and, perhaps, the establishment of my fame. But my pride was soon humbled, and a sober melancholy was spread over my mind, by the idea that I had taken an everlasting leave of an old and agreeable companion, and that whatsoever might be the future date of my History, the life of

the historian must be short and precarious. I will add two facts, which have seldom occurred in the composition of six, or at least of five, quartos. 1. My first rough manuscript, without any intermediate copy, has been sent to the press. 2. Not a sheet has been seen by any human eyes, excepting those of the author and the printer: the faults and the merits are exclusively my own.—*Memoirs of my Life and Writings.*

## XLVI.

### SIR PHILIP FRANCIS—'JUNIUS.'

1740—1818.

THE letters of Junius appeared in the *Public Advertiser* at intervals from 1767 to 1772. The authorship of the Letters is not certainly known. It has been ascribed to at least forty or fifty distinguished men, among others to Burke, Lyttleton, and Gibbon. The general belief among competent judges appears now to be that the Letters were written by Sir Philip Francis. This belief rests on circumstantial evidence—the correspondence of dates and incidents in the life of Francis with dates and incidents in the appearance of the Letters—on the agreement of style and sentiment, and on minute resemblances of spelling and punctuation. The knowledge of details and insight into the interior movement of different departments of the Government displayed by Junius were such as Francis almost alone must have possessed, while he avowedly shared the friendships and antipathies, and indulged in the strongly personal animosities and resentments expressed by Junius.

None of Francis' acknowledged publications are so highly finished as the Letters, which were polished to the utmost brilliancy, and by graces of style, unrivalled sarcasm, terse expression, and happy imagery brought Junius' name to prominence and popularity. That Francis never acknowledged the authorship may be accounted for by the fact that this admission would have implicated others, and that he himself moved among the persons whom he attacked, and mixed in the society which he so severely aspersed. Towards the close of his life he is said to have indirectly admitted the authorship of the Letters within his own family.

Francis was born in 1740, and died in 1818. He was for some years a clerk in the War Office, and was afterwards appointed a member of the Supreme Council at Calcutta, during the governorship of Warren Hastings, with whom he was engaged in constant feuds, and whose prosecution he actively promoted.\*

The Letters of Junius were the most famous political writings of their day, and now that many of the persons and topics with which they deal are forgotten, retain their reputation on account of their style.

The Letters are mainly onslaughts on the personal as well as the public character of the statesmen against whom they are directed. Their tone of bitter and sarcastic invective gains additional force from the constant insinuation that the writer reserves worse accusations to be brought against his victims at some future time.

To a modern reader the effect of the invective is injured by its personal character, but this did not detract from its influence upon the contemporaries of Junius. They felt that his attacks were on the whole just, and that their violence was excused by the circumstances of the time. It was a period of national disaster and of political corruption. When the public good was sacrificed to the meanest private objects, it was legitimate to assail the private life of political leaders. As politics had become a matter of personal intrigue, a writer on public affairs had a justification which he does not now possess for the use of personalities. The judgment formed by Junius of the statesmen of his day has been confirmed by the verdict of posterity. His attacks, though sometimes unjust to individuals, were a protest against real and gross abuses, and gave vent to a feeling of public indignation which was in that age denied any other expression.

### **1. From a Letter to the Duke of Grafton.**

If nature had given you an understanding qualified to keep pace with the wishes and principles of your heart, she

would have made you, perhaps, the most formidable minister that ever was employed, under a limited monarch, to accomplish the ruin of a free people. When neither the feelings of shame, the reproaches of conscience, nor the dread of punishment, form any bar to the designs of a minister, the people would have too much reason to lament their condition, if they did not find some resource in the weakness of his understanding. We owe it to the bounty of Providence, that the completest depravity of the heart is sometimes strangely united with a confusion of the mind, which counteracts the most favourite principles, and makes the same man treacherous without art, and a hypocrite without deceiving. The measures, for instance, in which your Grace's activity has been chiefly exerted, as they were adopted without skill, should have been conducted with more than common dexterity. But truly, my Lord, the execution has been as gross as the design. By one decisive step, you have defeated all the arts of writing. You have fairly confounded the intrigues of opposition, and silenced the clamours of faction. A dark ambiguous system might require and furnish the materials of ingenious illustration; and, in doubtful measures, the virulent exaggeration of party must be employed, to rouse and engage the passions of the people. You have now brought the merits of your administration to an issue, on which every Englishman, of the narrowest capacity, may determine for himself. It is not an alarm to the passions, but a calm appeal to the judgment of the people, upon their own most essential interests. A more experienced minister would not have hazarded a direct invasion of the first principles of the constitution, before he had made some progress in subduing the spirit of the people. With such a cause as yours, my Lord, it is not sufficient that you have the court at your devotion, unless you can find

means to corrupt or intimidate the jury. The collective body of the people form that jury, and from *their* decision there is but one appeal.

Whether you have talents to support you, at a crisis of such difficulty and danger, should long since have been considered. Judging truly of your disposition, you have perhaps mistaken the extent of your capacity. Good faith and folly have so long been received for synonymous terms, that the reverse of the proposition has grown into credit, and every villain fancies himself a man of abilities. It is the apprehension of your friends, my Lord, that you have drawn some hasty conclusion of this sort, and that a partial reliance upon your moral character has betrayed you beyond the depth of your understanding. You have now carried things too far to retreat. You have plainly declared to the people what they are to expect from the continuance of your administration. It is time for your Grace to consider what you also may expect in return from *their* spirit and *their* resentment.

With what force, my Lord, with what protection are you prepared to meet the united detestation of the people of England? The city of London has given a generous example to the kingdom, in what manner a king of this country ought to be addressed; and I fancy, my lord, it is not yet in your courage to stand between your Sovereign and the addresses of his subjects. The injuries you have done this country are such as demand not only redress, but vengeance. In vain shall you look for protection to that venal vote, which you have already paid for—another must be purchased; and to save a minister, the House of Commons must declare themselves not only independent of their constituents, but the determined enemies of the constitution. Consider, my Lord, whether this be an extremity to which their fears will permit



them to advance ; or, if *their* protection should fail you, how far you are authorized to rely upon the sincerity of those smiles, which a pious court lavishes without reluctance upon a libertine by profession. It is not, indeed, the least of the thousand contradictions which attend you, that a man, marked to the world by the grossest violation of all ceremony and decorum, should be the first servant of a court, in which prayers are morality, and kneeling is religion. Trust not too far to appearances, by which your predecessors have been deceived, though they have not been injured. Even the best of princes may at last discover, that this is a contention, in which everything may be lost, but nothing can be gained ; and as you became minister by accident, were adopted without choice, trusted without confidence, and continued without favour, be assured that, whenever an occasion presses, you will be discarded without even the forms of regret. You will then have reason to be thankful, if you are permitted to retire to that seat of learning, which in contemplation of the system of your life, the comparative purity of your manners with those of their high steward, and a thousand other recommending circumstances, has chosen you to encourage the growing virtue of their youth, and to preside over their education. Whenever the spirit of distributing prebends and bishoprics shall have departed from you, you will find that learned seminary perfectly recovered from the delirium of an installation, and, what in truth it ought to be, once more a peaceful scene of slumber and thoughtless meditation. The venerable tutors of the university will no longer distress your modesty, by proposing you for a pattern to their pupils. The learned dulness of declamation will be silent ; and even the venal muse, though happiest in fiction, will forget your virtues. Yet, for the benefit of the succeeding age, I could wish that your retreat might be deferred, until your morals

shall happily be ripened to that maturity of corruption, at which the worst examples cease to be contagious.—*Letters of Junius.*

## 2. To the Printer of the Public Advertiser.

THE ruin or prosperity of a state depends so much upon the administration of its government, that, to be acquainted with the merit of a ministry, we need only observe the condition of the people. If we see them obedient to the laws, prosperous in their industry, united at home, and respected abroad, we may reasonably presume that their affairs are conducted by men of experience, abilities, and virtue. If, on the contrary, we see an universal spirit of distrust and dissatisfaction, a rapid decay of trade, dissensions in all parts of the empire, and a total loss of respect in the eyes of foreign powers, we may pronounce without hesitation, that the government of that country is weak, distracted, and corrupt. The multitude, in all countries, are patient to a certain point. Ill-usage may rouse their indignation, and hurry them into excesses; but the original fault is in government. Perhaps there never was an instance of a change, in the circumstances and temper of a whole nation, so sudden and extraordinary as that which the misconduct of ministers has, within these few years, produced in Great Britain. When our gracious sovereign ascended the throne, we were a flourishing and a contented people. If the personal virtues of a king could have insured the happiness of his subjects, the scene could not have altered so entirely as it has done. The idea of uniting all parties, of trying all characters, and distributing the offices of state by rotation, was gracious and benevolent to an extreme, though it has not yet produced the many salutary effects which were in-

tended by it. To say nothing of the wisdom of such a plan, it undoubtedly arose from an unbounded goodness of heart, in which folly had no share. It was not a capricious partiality to new faces;—it was not a natural turn for low intrigue;—nor was it the treacherous amusement of double and triple negotiations. No, Sir; it arose from a continued anxiety, in the purest of all possible hearts, for the general welfare. Unfortunately for us, the event has not been answerable to the design. After a rapid succession of changes, we are reduced to that state, which hardly any change can mend. Yet there is no extremity of distress, which of itself ought to reduce a great nation to despair. It is not the disorder, but the physician;—it is not a casual concurrence of calamitous circumstances;—it is the pernicious hand of government, which alone can make a whole people desperate.

Without much political sagacity, or any extraordinary depth of observation, we need only mark how the principal departments of the state are bestowed, and look no farther for the true cause of every mischief that befalls us. . . .

The pure and impartial administration of justice is perhaps the firmest bond to secure a cheerful submission of the people, and to engage their affections to government. It is not sufficient that questions of private right or wrong are justly decided, nor that judges are superior to the vileness of pecuniary corruption. Jefferies himself, when the court had no interest, was an upright judge. A court of justice may be subject to another sort of bias more important and pernicious, as it reaches beyond the interest of individuals, and affects the whole community. A judge under the influence of government, may be honest enough in the decision of private causes, yet a traitor to the public. When a victim is marked out by the ministry, this judge

will offer himself to perform the sacrifice. He will not scruple to prostitute his dignity, and betray the sanctity of his office, whenever an arbitrary point is to be carried for government, or the resentment of a court to be gratified.

These principles and proceedings, odious and contemptible as they are, in effect are no less injudicious. A wise and generous people are roused by every appearance of oppressive, unconstitutional measures, whether those measures are supported only by the power of government, or masked under the forms of a court of justice. Prudence and self-preservation will oblige the most moderate dispositions to make common cause, even with a man whose conduct they censure, if they see him persecuted in a way which the real spirit of the laws will not justify. The facts, on which these remarks are founded, are too notorious to require an application.

This, Sir, is the detail. In one view, behold a nation overwhelmed with debt; her revenues wasted; her trade declining; the affections of her colonies alienated; the duty of the magistrate transferred to the soldiery; a gallant army, which never fought unwillingly but against their fellow-subjects, mouldering away for want of the direction of a man of common abilities and spirit; and in the last instance, the administration of justice becomes odious and suspected to the whole body of the people. This deplorable scene admits of but one addition—that we are governed by counsels, from which a reasonable man can expect no remedy but poison, no relief but death.

If, by the immediate interposition of Providence, it were possible for us to escape a crisis so full of terror and despair, posterity will not believe the history of the present times. They will either conclude that our distresses were imaginary, or that we had the good fortune to be governed by men of

acknowledged integrity and wisdom: they will not believe it possible that their ancestors could have survived or recovered from so desperate a condition, while a Duke of Grafton was Prime Minister, a Lord North Chancellor of the Exchequer, a Weymouth and a Hillsborough Secretaries of State, a Granby Commander in Chief, and Mansfield chief criminal Judge of the kingdom.—*Letters of Junius.*

### 3. To his Grace the Duke of Bedford.

You are so little accustomed to receive any marks of respect or esteem from the public, that if, in the following lines, a compliment or expression of applause should escape me, I fear you would consider it as a mockery of your established character, and perhaps an insult to your understanding. You have nice feelings, my Lord, if we may judge from your resentments. Cautious therefore of giving offence, where you have so little deserved it, I shall leave the illustration of your virtues to other hands. Your friends have a privilege to play upon the easiness of your temper, or possibly they are better acquainted with your good qualities than I am. You have done good by stealth. The rest is upon record. You have still left ample room for speculation, when panegyric is exhausted.

You are indeed a very considerable man. The highest rank;—a splendid fortune;—and a name, glorious till it was yours,—were sufficient to have supported you with meaner abilities than I think you possess. From the first, you derive a constitutional claim to respect; from the second, a natural extensive authority;—the last created a partial expectation of hereditary virtues. The use you have made of these uncommon advantages might have been more honourable to yourself, but could not be more instructive

to mankind. We may trace it in the veneration of your country, the choice of your friends, and the accomplishment of every sanguine hope which the public might have conceived from the illustrious name of Russel.

The eminence of your station gave you a commanding prospect of your duty. The road, which led to honour, was open to your view. You could not lose it by mistake, and you had no temptation to depart from it by design. Compare the natural dignity and importance of the richest peer of England;—the noble independence, which he might have maintained in parliament, and the real interest and respect, which he might have acquired, not only in parliament, but through the whole kingdom:—compare these glorious distinctions with the ambition of holding a share in government, the emoluments of a place, the sale of a borough, or the purchase of a corporation; and though you may not regret the virtues which create respect, you may see with anguish how much real importance and authority you have lost. Consider the character of an independent virtuous Duke of Bedford; imagine what he might be in this country, then reflect one moment upon what you are. If it be possible for me to withdraw my attention from the fact, I will tell you in the theory what such a man might be.

Conscious of his own weight and importance, his conduct in parliament would be directed by nothing but the constitutional duty of a peer. He would consider himself as a guardian of the laws. Willing to support the just measures of government, but determined to observe the conduct of the minister with suspicion, he would oppose the violence of faction with as much firmness, as the encroachments of prerogative. He would be as little capable of bargaining with the minister for places for himself or his dependants,

as of descending to mix himself in the intrigues of opposition. Whenever an important question called for his opinion in parliament, he would be heard, by the most profligate minister, with deference and respect. His authority would either sanctify or disgrace the measures of government.—The people would look up to him as their protector; and a virtuous prince would have one honest man in his dominions, in whose integrity and judgment he might safely confide.—*Letters of Junius.*

#### 4. To the Right Hon. Lord Mansfield.

You will not question my veracity, when I assure you, that it has not been owing to any particular respect for your person that I have abstained from you so long. Besides the distress and danger with which the press is threatened, when your lordship is party, and the party is to be judge, I confess I have been deterred by the difficulty of the task. Our language has no term of reproach, the mind has no idea of detestation, which has not already been happily applied to you, and exhausted.—Ample justice has been done by abler pens than mine to the separate merits of your life and character. Let it be *my* humble office to collect the scattered sweets, till their united virtue tortures the sense.

Permit me to begin with paying a just tribute to Scotch sincerity wherever I find it. I own I am not apt to confide in the professions of gentlemen of that country; and when they smile, I feel an involuntary emotion to guard myself against mischief. With this general opinion of an ancient nation, I always thought it much to your lordship's honour, that, in your earlier days, you were but little infected with the prudence of your country. You had some original

attachments, which you took every proper opportunity to acknowledge. The liberal spirit of youth prevailed over your native discretion. Your zeal in the cause of an unhappy prince was expressed with the sincerity of wine, and some of the solemnities of religion. This I conceive, is the most amiable point of view in which your character has appeared. Like an honest man, you took that part in politics which might have been expected from your birth, education, country, and connections. There was something generous in your attachment to the banished house of Stuart. We lament the mistakes of a good man, and do not begin to detest him until he affects to renounce his principles. Why did you not adhere to that loyalty you once professed? . . . England, I think, might have spared you without regret. Your friends will say, perhaps, that although you deserted the fortune of your liege Lord, you have adhered firmly to the principles which drove his father from the throne,—that, without openly supporting the person, you have done essential service to the cause, and consoled yourself for the loss of a favourite family, by reviving and establishing the maxims of their government. This is the way in which a Scotchman's understanding corrects the errors of his heart. My lord, I acknowledge the truth of the defence, and can trace it through all your conduct. I see through your whole life one uniform plan to enlarge the power of the crown, at the expence of the liberty of the subject. To this object, your thoughts, words, and actions, have been constantly directed. In contempt or ignorance of the common law of England, you have made it your study to introduce into the court where you preside, maxims of jurisprudence unknown to Englishmen. . . .

The injustice done to an individual is sometimes of service to the public. Facts are apt to alarm us more than the



most dangerous principles. The sufferings and firmness of a printer have roused the public attention. You knew and felt that your conduct would not bear a parliamentary inquiry; and you hoped to escape it by the meanest, the basest sacrifice of dignity and consistency, that ever was made by a great magistrate. Where was your firmness, where was that vindictive spirit, of which we have seen so many examples, when a man, so inconsiderable as Bingley, could force you to confess, in the face of this country, that, for two years together, you had illegally deprived an English subject of his liberty, and that he had triumphed over you at last? Yet I own, my lord, that yours is not an uncommon character. Women, and men like women, are timid, vindictive, and irresolute. Their passions counteract each other; and make the same creature, at one moment hateful, at another contemptible. I fancy, my Lord, some time will elapse before you venture to commit another Englishman for refusing to answer interrogatories.

The doctrine you have constantly delivered in cases of libel, is another powerful evidence of a settled plan to contract the legal power of juries, and to draw questions, inseparable from fact, within the *Arbitrium* of the court. Here, my Lord, you have fortune on your side. When you invade the province of the jury in matter of libel, you in effect attack the liberty of the press, and with a single stroke wound two of your greatest enemies.—In some instances you have succeeded, because jurymen are too often ignorant of their own rights, and too apt to be awed by the authority of a chief-justice. In other criminal prosecutions, the malice of the design is confessedly as much the subject of consideration to a jury, as the certainty of the fact. If a different doctrine prevails in the case of libels, why should it not extend to *all* criminal cases?—

why not to capital offences? I see no reason (and I dare say you will agree with me, that there is no good one) why the life of the subject should be better protected against you, than his liberty or property. Why should you enjoy the full power of pillory, fine, and imprisonment, and not be indulged with hanging or transportation? With your Lordship's fertile genius and merciful disposition, I can conceive such an exercise of the power you have, as could hardly be aggravated by that which you have not.

But, my Lord, since you have laboured (and not unsuccessfully) to destroy the substance *of the trial*, why should you suffer the form of the *verdict* to remain? Why force twelve honest men, in palpable violation of their oaths, to pronounce their fellow-subject a *guilty* man, when, almost at the same moment, you forbid their inquiring into the only circumstance which, in the eye of law and reason, constitutes guilt—the malignity or innocence of his intentions?—But I understand your Lordship.—If you could succeed in making the trial by jury useless and ridiculous, you might then with greater safety introduce a bill into parliament for enlarging the jurisdiction of the court, and extending your favourite trial by interrogatories to every question in which the life or liberty of an Englishman is concerned. . . .

The mischiefs you have done this country are not confined to your interpretation of the laws. You are a minister, my Lord; and, as such, have long been consulted. Let us candidly examine what use you have made of your ministerial influence. I will not descend to little matters, but come at once to those important points on which your resolution was waited for, on which the expectation of your opinion kept a great part of the nation in suspense.—A constitutional question arises upon a declaration of the law of parliament,

by which the freedom of election and the birthright of the subject were supposed to have been invaded.—The King's servants are accused of violating the constitution.—The nation is in a ferment.—The ablest men of all parties engage in the question, and exert their utmost abilities in the discussion of it.—What part has the honest Lord Mansfield acted? As an eminent judge of the law, his opinion would have been respected.—As a peer, he had a right to demand an audience of his Sovereign, and inform him that his ministers were pursuing unconstitutional measures.—Upon other occasions, my Lord, you have no difficulty in finding your way into the closet. The pretended neutrality of belonging to no party, will not save your reputation. In questions merely political, an honest man may stand neuter. But the laws and constitution are the general property of the subject; not to defend is to relinquish;—and who is there so senseless as to renounce his share in a common benefit, unless he hopes to profit by a new division of the spoil. . . .

In public affairs, my Lord, cunning, let it be ever so well wrought, will not conduct a man honourably through life. Like bad money, it may be current for a time, but it will soon be cried down. It cannot consist with a liberal spirit, though it be sometimes united with extraordinary qualifications. When I acknowledge your abilities, you may believe I am sincere. I feel for human nature, when I see a man, so gifted as you are, descend to such vile practice.—Yet do not suffer your vanity to console you too soon. Believe me, my good Lord, you are not admired in the same degree in which you are detested. It is only the partiality of your friends, that balances the defects of your heart with the superiority of your understanding. No learned man, even among your own tribe, thinks you qualified to preside

in a court of common law. Yet it is confessed, that, under *Justinian*, you might have made an incomparable *Prætor*.— It is remarkable enough, but I hope not ominous, that the laws you understand best, and the judges you affect to admire most, flourished in the decline of a great empire, and are supposed to have contributed to its fall.—*Letters of Junius.*

## XLVII.

### WILLIAM SCOTT, LORD STOWELL.

1745-1836.

WILLIAM SCOTT, Baron Stowell, the elder brother of Lord Eldon, was the eldest son of a coalfitter of Newcastle. He was born October 8th, 1745, at the time when the insurgents under Charles Edward were advancing into England. He was fortunate in his first teacher at the Grammar School of Newcastle, and after an honourable career at Corpus Christi College, Oxford, he became a Fellow of University College. At Oxford he remained until 1799, and filled several College and University offices with great distinction. Eleven years before he finally quitted the University, he had been elected a member of 'The Club,' which Johnson and Burke had made famous. He attached himself to the Doctors' Commons bar, and rapidly rose into eminence as an advocate. Promotion followed in due course. In 1798 he became Judge of the Admiralty Court. In 1801 he was elected member for the University of Oxford, and retained the seat until his elevation to the peerage in 1821. In 1828 he retired. The last part of his life was clouded by imbecility. He died in 1836, in his ninety-first year.

Lord Stowell, as an authority in the particular branch of the law with which he was conversant, stands unrivalled. His judgments have been praised by those most qualified to pronounce an opinion, as masterpieces of sagacity and penetration. His grasp of principles is comprehensive. He possesses, moreover, the power of seizing on the essential points in cases abounding in detail, and of presenting the main features of an intricate question in a way which the most careless or unlearned reader can

easily comprehend. His style, though sometimes diffuse, is always elegant and graceful. He was familiar with the masters of English prose, and it is his especial distinction to have woven into the fabric of his judgments, passages which will bear comparison with many of the best known specimens of our literature.

### 1. The Contract of Marriage.

MARRIAGE, in its origin, is a contract of natural law; it may exist between two individuals of different sexes, although no third person existed in the world, as happened in the case of the common ancestors of mankind. It is the parent, not the child, of civil society, '*Principium urbis et quasi seminarium Reipublicae.*' In civil society it becomes a civil contract, regulated and prescribed by law, and endowed with civil consequences. In most civilized countries, acting under a sense of the force of sacred obligations, it has had the sanctions of religion superadded: it then becomes a religious, as well as a natural, and civil contract; for it is a great mistake to suppose that, because it is the one, therefore it may not likewise be the other. Heaven itself is made a party to the contract, and the consent of the individuals, pledged to each other, is ratified and consecrated by a vow to God. It was natural enough that such a contract should, under the religious system which prevailed in Europe, fall under ecclesiastical notice and cognizance, with respect both to its theological and its legal constitution; though it is not unworthy of remark that, amidst the manifold ritual provisions, made by the Divine Lawgiver of the Jews for various offices and transactions of life, there is no ceremony prescribed for the celebration of marriage. In the Christian Church marriage was elevated

in a later age to the dignity of a sacrament, in consequence of its divine institution, and of some expressions of high and mysterious import respecting it contained in the sacred writings. The law of the Church, the canon law (a system which, in spite of its absurd pretensions to a higher origin, is in many of its provisions deeply enough founded in the wisdom of man,) although, in conformity to the prevailing theological opinion, it revered marriage as a sacrament, still so far respected its natural and civil origin, as to consider, that where the natural and civil contract was formed it had the full essence of matrimony without the intervention of the priest; it had even in that state the character of a sacrament; for it is a misapprehension to suppose, that this intervention was required as matter of necessity, even for that purpose, before the Council of Trent.—*Judgments in the Consistory Court.*

## 2. Places, and Rites, of Sepulture.

THE practice of sepulture has also varied with respect to the places where performed. In ancient times, caves seem to have been in high request—then gardens, or other private demesnes of proprietors—inclosed spaces out of the walls of towns—or by the sides of roads (*siste viator*)—and finally, in Christian countries, churches and church-yards, where the deceased could receive the pious and charitable wishes of the faithful, who resorted thither on the various calls of public worship. In our own country, the practice of burying in churches is said to be anterior to that of burying in, what are now called, church-yards, but was reserved for persons of pre-eminent sanctity of life. Men of less memorable merit were buried in inclosed places not connected with the sacred edifices themselves. But a connection, imported from

Rome by Cuthbert, Archbishop of Canterbury, took place about the year 750; and spaces of ground adjoining the churches were carefully inclosed, and solemnly consecrated and appropriated to the burials of those who had been entitled to attend divine service in those churches; and who now became entitled to render back into those places their remains to earth, the common mother of mankind, without payment for the ground which they were to occupy, or for the pious offices which solemnized the act of interment.

In what way the mortal remains are to be conveyed to the grave, and there deposited, I do not find any positive rule of law, or of religion, that prescribes. The authority under which the received practices exist, is to be found in our manners, rather than in our laws—they have their origin in natural sentiments of public decency and private affection—they are ratified by common usage and consent; and being attached to a subject of the gravest and most impressive nature, remain unaltered by private caprice and fancy, amidst all the giddy revolutions that are perpetually varying the modes and fashions that belong to the lighter circumstances of human life.—*Judgments in the Consistory Court.*

### 3. The Story of an Unhappy Marriage.

THE truth of the case, according to the impression which the whole of it makes upon my mind, is this:—Two persons marry together; both of good moral characters, but with something of warmth, and sensibility, in each of their tempers; the husband is occasionally inattentive; the wife has a vivacity that sometimes offends and sometimes is offended; something like unkindness is produced, and is then easily inflamed; the lady broods over petty resentments, which are anxiously fed by the busy whispers of



humble confidantes; her complaints, aggravated by their reports, are carried to her relations, and meet perhaps with a facility of reception, from their honest but well-intentioned minds. A state of mutual irritation increases; something like incivility is continually practising; and, where it is not practised, it is continually suspected; every word, every act, every look, has a meaning attached to it; it becomes a contest of spirit, in form, between two persons eager to take, and not absolutely backward to give, mutual offence; at last the husband breaks up the family connection, and breaks it up with circumstances sufficiently expressive of disgust: treaties are attempted, and they miscarry, as they might be expected to do, in the hands of persons strongly disaffected towards each other; and then, for the very first time, a suit of cruelty is thought of; a libel is given in, black with criminating matter; recrimination comes from the other side; accusations rain heavy and thick on all sides, till all is involved in gloom, and the parties lose total sight of each other's real character, and of the truth of every one fact which is involved in the cause.

Out of this state of darkness and error it will not be easy for them to find their way. It were much to be wished that they could find it back again to domestic peace and happiness.—*Judgments in the Consistory Court.*

#### **4. On Western and Eastern Society.**

WHEREVER even a mere factory is founded in the eastern parts of the world, *European* persons trading under the shelter and protection of those establishments, are conceived to take their national character from that association under which they live and carry on their commerce. It is a rule of the law of nations, applying peculiarly to those countries,

and is different from what prevails ordinarily in *Europe* and the western parts of the world, in which men take their present national character from the general character of the country in which they are resident; and this distinction arises from the nature and habit of the countries. In the western parts of the world alien merchants mix in the society of the natives; access and intermixture are permitted; and they become incorporated to almost the full extent. But in the East, from the oldest times, an immiscible character has been kept up; foreigners are not admitted into the general body and mass of the society of the nation; they continue strangers and foreigners as all their fathers were—*Deris amara suam non intermiscuit undam*; not acquiring any national character under the general sovereignty of the country, and not tracing under any recognized authority of their own original country, they have been held to derive their present character from that of the association or factory, under whose protection they live and carry on their trade.—*Cases determined in the High Court of Admiralty—The Indian Chief.*

##### 5. Duty of the Judge in Questions of International Law.

I TRUST that it has not escaped my anxious recollection for one moment, what it is that the duty of my station calls for from me;—namely, to consider myself as stationed here, not to deliver occasional and shifting opinions to serve present purposes of particular national interest, but to administer with indifference that justice which the law of nations holds out, without distinction to independent states, some happening to be neutral and some to be belligerent. The seat of judicial authority is, indeed, locally *here*, in the belligerent country, according to the known law and practice of

nations: but the law itself has no locality. It is the duty of the person who sits here to determine this question exactly as he would determine the same question if sitting at *Stockholm*;—to assert no pretensions on the part of *Great Britain* which he would not allow to *Sweden* in the same circumstances, and to impose no duties on *Sweden*, as a neutral country, which he would not admit to belong to *Great Britain* in the same character. If, therefore, I mistake the law in this matter, I mistake that which I consider, and which I mean should be considered, as the universal law upon the question; a question regarding one of the most important rights of belligerent nations relatively to neutrals.—*Cases determined in the High Court of Admiralty—The Maria.*

### 6. The Law of Marriage.

WHAT is the law of marriages, in all foreign establishments settled in countries, professing a religion essentially different? In the *English* Factories at *Lisbon*, *Leghorn*, *Oporto*, *Cadiz*—and in the Factories in the East; *Smyrna*, *Aleppo*, and others? in all of which, (some of these establishments existing by authority under treaties, and others under indulgence and toleration) marriages are regulated by the law of the original country, to which they are still considered to belong. An *English* resident at *St. Petersburg* does not look to the Ritual of the Greek Church, but to the Rubric of the Church of *England*, when he contracts a marriage with an *English* woman. Nobody can suppose, that whilst the *Mogul* empire existed, an *Englishman* was bound to consult the Koran, for the celebration of his marriage. Even where no foreign connection can be ascribed, a respect is shewn to the opinions and practice of a distinct people. The validity of a Greek marriage, in the extensive dominions of *Turkey*, is left to

depend, I presume, upon their own canons, without any reference to *Mahometan* ceremonies. There is a *jus gentium* upon this matter.—a comity, which treats with tenderness, or at least with toleration, the opinions and usages of a distinct people in this transaction of marriage. It may be difficult to say, *a priori*, how far the general law should circumscribe its own authority in this matter; but practice has established the principle in several instances; and where the practice is admitted, it is entitled to acceptance and respect. It has sanctioned the marriages of foreign subjects, in the houses of the Ambassadors of the foreign country, to which they belong: I am not aware of any judicial recognition upon the point; but the reputation, which the validity of such marriages has acquired, makes such a recognition by no means improbable, if such a question was brought to judgment. In the case which has now occurred,—the case of a conquering force, stationed in a conquered country or colony, for the purpose of enforcing the reluctant obedience of the natives, and composing, for the present, a distinct and immiscible body,—can it be maintained, that the success of their arms, and the service of vigilant control in which they are employed, lays them at the feet of the civil jurisdiction of the country, without any exception whatever? In a former case, the Court *intimated* Its opinion, (for the case never reached a decision) that the law of *France* would not apply to an officer of the *English Army of Occupation*, marrying an *English* lady; on the ground that, at that time, and under such circumstances, the parties were not *French* subjects, under the dominion of *French* law; and surely the condition of a garrison of a subdued country, is not more capable of impressing the domestic character, and all the obligations it carries with it, than the situation of the Army of Occupation at that time in *France*.

Much of the order of a society, so peculiarly placed, depends upon a discreet application of general principles to particular institutions; this can hardly be specified beforehand. But, that the whole mass of law, formed for another state of things, and for a *status personarum* widely different, is to be immediately forced down upon these foreign guardians, in their own separate transactions, and without any reserve or limitation, is a proposition much too inconvenient in its consequences, to be perfectly just in its principle.—*Judgments in the Consistory Court.*

## XLVIII.

### DUGALD STEWART.

1753-1828.

DUGALD STEWART was born at Edinburgh in 1753. He was educated at the High School of that city, where, under the instruction of Dr. Adams, was laid the foundation of those classical tastes and accomplishment which he cherished through life. From the High School Dugald Stewart passed into the University of Edinburgh, where he studied for four Sessions. He next entered the University of Glasgow, partly with a view to obtaining a Snell Exhibition to enable him to pursue his studies at Oxford, but also for the sake of attending the prelections of Dr. Thomas Reid, who was then rising into fame as the inaugurator of a new æra in the history of philosophy. In 1772 he was recalled, when only twenty years of age, to Edinburgh to assist his father, the eminent geometrician, Matthew Stewart, in the duties of the mathematical chair. He conducted the classes with marked ability, and after three years was appointed conjoint Professor of Mathematics in 1775. In the Session of 1778-9 Mr. Stewart lectured to the classes of Moral Philosophy during the absence in America of the Professor. His brilliant appearances in this new capacity obtained much favour from his audience; and on the resignation of Dr. Ferguson, in 1785, he was transferred to the Chair of Moral Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh, and held that office until 1820, when he formally resigned it, having ceased to lecture for some years previously. He died in 1828.

Dugald Stewart was at one time the most popular and widely read of British philosophical writers, and he is still the typical represen-

tative of what is called the Scottish School. In ethics he maintained with Bishop Butler, whose views he did much to illustrate and unfold, the primitive and absolute authority of conscience. In mental philosophy his plan was to distinguish, describe, and analyze the faculties of the mind as they exist in mature and civilized beings; he never attempted, as is done by the psychologists and physiologists of the present day, to 'take the clock to pieces,' to trace back these faculties to their earliest germs, to examine them in connection with their physiological accompaniments, and thus to compare them with analogous manifestations in infants, savages, and brutes. His lectures on *Political Economy*, which formed a part of his course, are in a somewhat fragmentary condition, as he did not live to revise them for publication. They are founded mainly on the views of Adam Smith. Though perhaps not a very profound, and certainly not an original thinker, he is acute, judicious, and learned, and his style is always elegant and refined. Those who desire, by the study of a single author, to obtain a succinct account of the principal ancient and modern philosophical systems, can hardly be directed to any better source than his lectures on the *Active and Moral Powers*, and his *Elements of the Philosophy of the Human Mind*. A compendium of these lectures, which fill five octavo volumes, is given in an unusually attractive form, considering its brevity, in his *Outlines of Moral Philosophy*. It has thence become an extremely popular textbook of mental and moral science. His *Philosophical Essays* appeared in 1810, shortly after he had withdrawn from the active duties of his chair, and are perhaps the ablest and certainly the most interesting of his works.

### 1. The Rapidity of Thought in Interpreting Language.

WHEN I consult Johnson's Dictionary, I find many words of which he has enumerated forty, fifty, or even sixty different significations; and, after all the pains he has taken to distinguish these from each other, I am frequently at a loss how

to avail myself of his definitions. Yet, when a word of this kind occurs to me in a book, or even when I hear it pronounced in the rapidity of discourse, I at once select, without the slightest effort of conscious thought, the precise meaning which it was intended to convey. How is this to be explained but by the light thrown upon the problematical term by the general import of the sentence?—a species of interpretation easily conceivable, where I have leisure to study the context deliberately; but which, in the circumstances I have now supposed, implies a quickness in the exercise of the intellectual powers, which, the more it is examined, will appear the more astonishing. It is constant habit alone that keeps these intellectual processes out of view;—giving to the mind such a celerity in its operations, as eludes the utmost vigilance of our attention; and exhibiting to the eyes of common observers, the use of speech, as a much simpler, and less curious phenomenon, than it is in reality.

A still more palpable illustration of the same remark presents itself, when the language we listen to admits of such transpositions in the arrangement of words as are familiar to us in the Latin. In such cases, the artificial structure of the discourse suspends, in a great measure, our conjectures about the sense, till at the close of the period, the verb in the very instant of its utterance, unriddles the enigma. Previous to this, the former words and phrases resemble those detached and unmeaning patches of different colours, which compose what opticians call an anamorphosis; while the effect of the verb, at the end, may be compared to that of the mirror by which the anamorphosis is reformed, and which combines these apparently fortuitous materials into a beautiful portrait or landscape.

In instances of this sort, it will be generally found, upon an accurate examination, that the intellectual act, as far as



we are able to trace it, is altogether simple, and incapable of analysis; and that the elements into which we flatter ourselves we have resolved it, are nothing more than the grammatical elements of speech;—the logical doctrine about the comparison of ideas bearing a much closer affinity to the task of a school-boy in parsing his lesson, than to the researches of philosophers, able to form a just conception of the mystery to be explained.

These observations are general, and apply to every case in which language is employed. When the subject, however, to which it relates, involves notions which are abstract and complex, the process of interpretation becomes much more complicated and curious; involving, at every step, that species of mental induction which I have already endeavoured to describe. In reading, accordingly, the most perspicuous discussions, in which such notions form the subject of the argument, little instruction is received, till we have made the reasonings our own, by revolving the steps again and again in our thoughts. The fact is, that, in cases of this sort, the function of language is not so much to convey knowledge (according to the common phrase) from one mind to another, as to bring two minds into the same train of thinking; and to confine them, as nearly as possible, to the same track. Many authors have spoken of the wonderful mechanism of speech; but none has hitherto attended to the far more wonderful mechanism which it puts into action behind the scene.—*Philosophical Essays.*

## 2. Attention and Memory.

I HAVE only to observe farther, with respect to *attention*, considered in the relation in which it stands to memory, that although it be a voluntary act, it requires experience to have

it always under command. In the case of objects to which we have been taught to attend at an early period of life, or which are calculated to rouse the curiosity, or to affect any of our passions, the attention fixes itself upon them, as it were spontaneously, and without any effort on our part, of which we are conscious. How perfectly do we remember, and even retain, for a long course of years, the faces and the hand-writings of our acquaintances, although we never took any particular pains to fix them in the memory? On the other hand, if an object does not interest some principle of our nature, we may examine it again and again, with a wish to treasure up the knowledge of it in the mind, without our being able to command that degree of attention which may lead us to recognise it the next time we see it. A person, for example, who has not been accustomed to attend particularly to horses or to cattle, may study for a considerable time the appearance of a horse or of a bullock, without being able a few days afterwards to pronounce on his identity; while a horse-dealer or a grazier recollects many hundreds of that class of animals with which he is conversant, as perfectly as he does the faces of his acquaintances. In order to account for this, I would remark, that although attention be a voluntary act, and although we are always able, when we choose, to make a momentary exertion of it; yet, unless the object to which it is directed be really interesting, in some degree, to the curiosity, the train of our ideas goes on, and we immediately forget our purpose. When we are employed, therefore, in studying such an object, it is not an exclusive and steady attention that we give to it, but we are losing sight of it, and recurring to it every instant; and the painful efforts of which we are conscious, are not, (as we are apt to suppose them to be,) efforts of uncommon attention, but unsuccessful

attempts to keep the mind steady to its object, and to exclude the extraneous ideas, which are from time to time soliciting its notice. . . .

I cannot help taking this opportunity of expressing a wish, that medical writers would be at more pains than they have been at hitherto, to ascertain the various effects which are produced on the memory by disease and old age. These effects are widely diversified in different cases. In some it would seem that the memory is impaired, in consequence of a diminution of the power of attention; in others, that the power of recollection is disturbed, in consequence of a derangement of that part of the constitution on which the association of ideas depends. The decay of memory, which is the common effect of age, seems to arise from the former of these causes. It is probable, that, as we advance in years, the capacity of attention is weakened by some physical change in the constitution; but it is also reasonable to think, that it loses its vigour partly from the effect which the decay of our sensibility, and the extinction of our passions, have, in diminishing the interest which we feel in the common occurrences of life. That no derangement takes place, in ordinary cases, in that part of the constitution on which the association of ideas depends, appears from the distinct and circumstantial recollection which old men retain of the transactions of their youth. . . .

In so far as this decay of memory which old age brings along with it, is a necessary consequence of a physical change in the constitution, or a necessary consequence of a diminution of sensibility, it is the part of a wise man to submit cheerfully to the lot of his nature. But it is not unreasonable to think, that something may be done by our own efforts, to obviate the inconveniences which commonly result from it. If individuals, who, in the early part

of life, have weak memories, are sometimes able to remedy this defect, by a greater attention to arrangement in their transactions, and to classification among their ideas, than is necessary to the bulk of mankind, might, it not be possible, in the same way, to ward off at least to a certain degree, the encroachments which time makes on this faculty? The few old men who continue in the active scenes of life to the last moment, it has been often remarked, complain, in general, much less of a want of recollection, than their contemporaries. This is undoubtedly owing partly to the effect which the pursuits of business must necessarily have, in keeping alive the power of attention. But it is probably owing also to new habits of arrangement, which the mind gradually and insensibly forms, from the experience of its growing infirmities. . . .

In general, wherever habits of inattention, and an incapacity of observation, are very remarkable, they will be found to have arisen from some defect in early education. I already remarked, that, when nature is allowed free scope, the curiosity, during early youth, is alive to every external object, and to every external occurrence, while the powers of imagination and reflection do not display themselves till a much later period; the former till about the age of puberty, and the latter till we approach to manhood. It sometimes, however, happens that, in consequence of a peculiar disposition of mind, or of an infirm bodily constitution, a child is led to seek amusement from books, and to lose a relish for those recreations which are suited to his age. In such instances, the ordinary progress of the intellectual powers is prematurely quickened; but that best of all educations is lost, which nature has prepared both for the philosopher and the man of the world, amidst the active sports and the hazardous adventures of childhood.

It is from these alone, that we can acquire, not only that force of character which is suited to the more arduous situations of life, but that complete and prompt command of attention to things external, without which the highest endowments of the understanding, however they may fit a man for the solitary speculations of the closet, are but of little use in the practice of affairs, or for enabling him to profit by his personal experience.

Where, however, such habits of inattention have unfortunately been contracted, we ought not to despair of them as perfectly incurable. The attention, indeed, as I formerly remarked, can seldom be forced in particular instances; but we may gradually learn to place the objects we wish to attend to, in lights more interesting than those in which we have been accustomed to view them.—*Philosophy of the Human Mind.*

### 3. The Origin of Language.

IN the case of objects which fall under the cognizance of any of our external senses, it is easy to conceive the origin of the different classes of words composing a conventional dialect; to conceive, for example, that two savages should agree to call this animal a Horse, and that tree an Oak. But, in words relating to things intellectual and moral, in what manner was the conventional connection at first established between the sign and the thing signified? In what manner (to take one of the simplest instances) was it settled, that the name of imagination should be given to one operation of the mind; that of recollection to a second; that of deliberation to a third; that of sagacity, or foresight, to a fourth? Or, supposing the use of these words to be once introduced, how was their meaning to be explained to a novice, altogether unaccustomed to think upon such subjects?

In answer to this question, it is to be observed, in the first place, that the meaning of many words, of which it is impossible to exhibit any sensible prototypes, is gradually collected by a species of induction, which is more or less successfully conducted by different individuals, according to the degree of their attention and judgment. The connection in which an unknown term stands in relation to the other words combined with it in the same sentence, often affords a key for its explanation in that particular instance; and in proportion as such instances are multiplied in the writings and conversation of men well acquainted with propriety of speech, the means are afforded of a progressive approximation towards its precise import. A familiar illustration of this process presents itself in the expedient which a reader naturally employs for deciphering the meaning of an unknown word in a foreign language, when he happens not to have a dictionary at hand. The first sentence where the word occurs, affords, it is probable, sufficient foundation for a vague conjecture concerning the notion annexed to it by the author;—some idea or other being necessarily substituted in its place, in order to make the passage at all intelligible. The next sentence where it is involved, renders this conjecture a little more definite; a third sentence contracts the field of doubt within still narrower limits; till, at length, a more extensive induction fixes completely the signification we are in quest of. There cannot be a doubt, I apprehend, that it is in some such way as this, that children slowly and imperceptibly enter into the abstract and complex notions annexed to numberless words in their mother tongue, of which we should find it difficult or impossible to convey the sense by formal definitions.

The strong tendency of the mind to express itself metaphorically, or analogically, on all abstract subjects, supplies

another help to facilitate the acquisition of language. The prevalence of this tendency among rude nations has been often remarked; and has been commonly accounted for, partly from the warmth of imagination supposed to be peculiarly characteristic of savages, and partly from the imperfections of their scanty vocabularies. The truth, however, is, that the same disposition is exhibited by man in every stage of his progress; prompting him uniformly, whenever the enlargement of his knowledge requires the use of a new word for the communication of his meaning, instead of coining at once a sound altogether arbitrary, to assist, as far as possible, the apprehension of his hearers, either by the happy employment of some old word in a metaphorical sense, or by grafting etymologically on some well known stock, a new *derivative*, significant, to his own fancy, of the thought he wishes to impart.

To this bias of the mind to enrich language, rather by a modification of old materials, than by the creation of new ones, it is owing that the number of primitive or radical words, in a cultivated tongue, bears so small a proportion to the whole amount of its vocabulary. In an original language, such as the Greek, the truth of this remark may be easily verified; and, accordingly, it is asserted by Adam Smith, that the number of its primitives does not exceed three hundred. In the compounded languages now spoken in Europe, it is a much more difficult task to establish the fact; but an irresistible presumption in its favour arises from this circumstance, That all who have turned their attention of late, in this island, to the study of etymology, are impressed with a deep and increasing conviction, founded on the discoveries which have been already made, that this branch of learning is still in its infancy; and that the roots of an immense variety of words, commonly supposed to be genuine *radicals*, may

be traced, in a satisfactory manner, to the Saxon or to the Icelandic. The delight which all men, however unlettered, take in indulging their crude conjectures on the etymological questions which are occasionally started in conversation, is founded on the same circumstance:—their experimental knowledge of the difficulty of introducing into popular speech a new sound, entirely arbitrary in its selection, and coined out of materials unemployed before. Another illustration of this occurs in the reluctance with which we adopt the idiomatical turns of expression in a foreign tongue, or even the cant words and phrases which, from time to time, are springing up in our own, till we have succeeded in forming some theory or conjecture to reconcile the apparent anomaly with the ordinary laws of human thought.—*Essay on the Tendency of some late Philological Speculations.*

#### 4. The Idea of Beauty.

NOTWITHSTANDING the great variety of qualities, physical, intellectual, and moral, to which the word beauty is applicable, I believe it will be admitted, that, in its primitive and most general acceptance, it refers to objects of sight. As the epithets sweet and delicious literally denote what is pleasing to the palate, and harmonious what is pleasing to the ear; as the epithets soft and warm denote certain qualities that are pleasing in objects of touch or of feeling;—so the epithet beautiful literally denotes what is pleasing to the eye. All these epithets, too, it is worthy of remark, are applied transitively to the perceptions of other senses. We speak of sweet and of soft sounds; of warm, of delicious, and of harmonious colouring, with as little impropriety, as of a beautiful voice, or of a beautiful piece of music. Mr. Burke, himself, has somewhere spoken of the soft green of the soul. If the



transitive applications of the word beauty be more numerous and more heterogeneous than those of the words sweetness, softness, and harmony, is it not probable that some account of this peculiarity may be derived from the comparative multiplicity of those perceptions of which the eye is the common organ? Such, accordingly, is the very simple principle on which the following speculations proceed; and which it is the chief aim of these speculations to establish. . . .

The first ideas of beauty formed by the mind, are, in all probability, derived from colours. Long before infants receive any pleasures from the beauties of form or of motion, (both of which require, for their perception, a certain effort of attention and of thought) their eye may be caught and delighted with brilliant colouring, or with splendid illumination. I am inclined, too, to suspect, that in the judgment of a peasant, this ingredient of beauty predominates over every other, even in his estimate of the perfections of the female form; and, in the inanimate creation, there seems to be little else which he beholds with any rapture. . . .

From the admiration of colours, the eye gradually advances to that of forms; beginning first with such as are most obviously regular. Hence the pleasure which children, almost without exception, express, when they see gardens laid out after the Dutch manner; and hence the justness of the epithet childish, or puerile, which is commonly employed to characterize this species of taste;—one of the earliest stages of its progress both in individuals and in nations.

When, in addition to the pleasures connected with colours, external objects present those which arise from certain modifications of form, the same name will be naturally applied to both the causes of the mixed emotion. The emotion appears, in point of fact, to our consciousness, simple and

uncompounded, no person being able to say, while it is felt, how much of the effect is to be ascribed to either cause, in preference to the other; and it is the philosopher alone, who ever thinks of attempting, by a series of observations and experiments, to accomplish such an analysis. The following expressions of Virgil shew how easily the fancy confounds these two ingredients of the beautiful under one common epithet. ‘*Edera formosior alba.*’ ‘*O formose puer, nimium ne crede colori.*’ That the adjective *formosus* originally referred to the beauty of form alone, is manifest from its etymology; and yet it would appear that, even to the correct taste of Virgil, it seemed no less applicable to the beauty of colour. . . .

Similar remarks may be extended to the word *Beauty*, when applied to motion, a species of beauty which may be considered as in part a modification of that of form; being perceived when a pleasing outline is thus sketched, or traced out to the spectator’s fancy. The beauty of motion has, however, beside this, a charm peculiar to itself; more particularly, when exhibited by an animated being;—above all, when exhibited by an individual of our own species. In these cases, it produces that powerful effect, to the unknown cause of which we give the name of *grace*;—an effect which seems to depend, in no inconsiderable degree, on the additional interest which the pleasing form derives from its fugitive and evanescent existence; the memory dwelling fondly on the charm which has fled, while the eye is fascinated with the expectation of what is to follow. A fascination, somewhat analogous to this, is experienced when we look at the undulations of a flag streaming to the wind;—at the wreathings and convolutions of a column of smoke;—or at the momentary beauties and splendours of fireworks, amid the darkness of night. In the human figure, however, the

enchanting power of graceful motion is probably owing chiefly to the living expression which it exhibits;—an expression ever renewed and ever varied,—of taste and of mental elegance.

From the combination of these three elements (of colours, of forms, and of motion) what a variety of complicated results may be conceived! And in any one of these results, who can ascertain the respective share of each element in its production? Is it wonderful, then, that the word Beauty, supposing it at first to have been applied to colours alone, should gradually and insensibly acquire a more extensive meaning?

In this enlargement, too, of the signification of the word, it is particularly worthy of remark, that it is not in consequence of the discovery of any quality belonging in common to colours, to forms, and to motion, considered abstractly, that the same word is now applied to them indiscriminately. They all indeed agree in this, that they give pleasure to the spectator; but there cannot, I think, be a doubt, that they please on principles essentially different; and that the transference of the word Beauty, from the first to the last, arises solely from their undistinguishable co-operation in producing the same agreeable effect, in consequence of their being all perceived by the same organ, and at the same instant.—*Essay on the Beautiful.*

### 5. On the Culture of the Imaginative Faculty.

It is reasonable also to believe, that there are numberless minds, in which the seeds of taste, though profusely sown, continue altogether dormant through life; either in consequence of a total want of opportunity to cultivate the habits by which it is to be matured, or of an attention completely

engrossed with other pursuits. In instances such as these, it is the province of education to lend her succour; to invigorate, by due exercise, those principles in which an original weakness may be suspected; and, by removing the obstacles which check the expansion of our powers in any of the directions in which nature disposes them to shoot, to enable her to accomplish and to perfect her own designs. . . .

In what manner Imagination may be encouraged and cherished in a mind where it had previously made little appearance, may be easily conceived from what was stated in a former Essay, with respect to the peculiar charm which sometimes accompanies the pleasures produced by its ideal combinations, when compared with the corresponding realities in nature and in human life. The eager curiosity of childhood, and the boundless gratification which it is so easy to afford it by well-selected works of fiction, give, in fact, to education, a stronger *purchase*, if I may use the expression, over this faculty, than what it possesses over any other. The attention may be thus insensibly seduced from the present objects of the senses, and the thoughts accustomed to dwell on the past, the distant, or the future, and, in the same proportion in which this effect is in any instance accomplished, '*the man*' (as Dr. Johnson has justly remarked) 'is exalted in the scale of intellectual being.' The tale of fiction will probably be soon laid aside with the toys and rattles of infancy; but the habits which it has contributed to fix, and the powers which it has brought into a state of activity, will remain with the possessor, permanent and inestimable treasures, to his latest hour. To myself, this appears the most solid advantage to be gained from fictitious composition, considered as an engine of early instruction; I mean, the attractions which it holds out for encouraging an intercourse with the authors best fitted to invigorate

and enrich the imagination, and to quicken whatever is dormant in the sensibility to beauty: or, to express myself still more plainly, the value of the incidents seems to me to arise chiefly from their tendency to entice the young reader into that fairy-land of poetry, where the scenes of romance are laid.—Nor is it to the young alone that I would confine these observations exclusively. Instances have frequently occurred of individuals, in whom the Power of Imagination has, at a more advanced period of life, been found susceptible of culture to a wonderful degree. In such men, what an accession is gained to their most refined pleasures! What enchantments are added to their most ordinary perceptions! The mind awakening, as if from a trance, to a new existence, becomes habituated to the most interesting aspects of life and of nature; the intellectual eye is ‘purged of its film;’ and things the most familiar and unnoticed, disclose charms invisible before. The same objects and events which were lately beheld with indifference, occupy now all the powers and capacities of the soul; the contrast between the present and the past serving only to enhance and to endear so unlooked-for an acquisition. . . .

And here, may I be allowed to recommend, in a more particular manner, the pleasures of imagination to such of my readers, as have hitherto been wholly engrossed with the study of the severer sciences, or who have been hurried, at too early a period, into active and busy life? Abstracting from the tendency which a relish for these pleasures obviously has to adorn the more solid acquisitions of the one class, and to ennoble, with liberality and light, the habits of the other, they may both be assured, that it will open to them sources of enjoyment hitherto inexperienced, and communicate the exercise of powers of which they are yet unconscious. It was said, with truth, by Charles the Twelfth of Sweden, that

he who was ignorant of the arithmetical art was but half a man;—*un homme à demi*. With how much greater force may a similar expression be applied to him, who carries to his grave, the neglected and unprofitable seeds of faculties, which it depended on himself to have reared to maturity, and of which the fruits bring accessions to human happiness, more precious than all the gratifications which power or wealth can command! I speak not of the laborious orders of society, to whom this class of pleasures must, from their condition, be, in a great measure, necessarily denied; but of men destined for the higher and more independent walks of life, who are too often led, by an ignorance of their own possible attainments, to exhaust all their toil on one little field of study, while they leave, in a state of nature, by far the most valuable portion of the intellectual inheritance to which they were born.—*Essay on the Culture of certain Intellectual Habits.*

## XLIX.

### WILLIAM COBBETT.

1762--1835.

WILLIAM COBBETT was born in 1762, near Farnham in Surrey. The remotest ancestor he had ever heard of was his grandfather—a day labourer, who had worked with the same farmer from his marriage to his death. His father, by economy, ability, and thrift, raised himself from the position of a labourer to that of a farmer. Cobbett's childhood was passed in the fields—scaring birds, weeding crops, leading a horse, harvesting, and finally driving the team and holding the plough, were his occupations. At eleven years of age, as told in one of the extracts given, he made his first flight into the world in search of adventures—at sixteen he determined to go to sea, but could get no captain to take him—at seventeen he finally started for the great city of London, where he supported himself for a time as a copying clerk. When about twenty-two, he enlisted as a private soldier, and rose by merit to the rank of Sergeant-Major. On returning to England with his regiment in 1791, after a four years' stay in America, he obtained his discharge, having served eight years, during seven of which he was a non-commissioned officer. Early in 1792 he married and went to France, but in a few months, at the outbreak of the Revolution, he embarked at Havre for America, where he resided for eight years. He there commenced his career as an author and editor, and also underwent his first prosecution for the violence of his attacks on the personal and political characters of public men. He returned to England in 1800, and started first the *Porcupine* and then the *Weekly Register*, which was continued till his death, at first as a

high Tory publication, and later, after Cobbett's own change of political views, as an ultra-Radical journal. He was twice prosecuted and fined for libel on different members of the Government, and in 1809 fined and imprisoned in Newgate for two years. His mode of life while there is described in one of the extracts. In 1817, to avoid a fourth prosecution under the 'Six Acts Bill,' he fled to America, where he remained for two years, till the repeal of the Act which had driven him into exile. A final prosecution in 1830 failed, the jury being unable to agree upon a verdict, and Cobbett gained reputation by the trial, which may be said to have closed the contest waged by the Government with the Press since 1809. He twice vainly endeavoured to enter Parliament, and finally, in 1832, after the passing of the Reform Bill, was elected Member for Oldham. He died in 1835.

Besides his voluminous political works and his writings as a journalist, Cobbett published numerous popular Treatises, among which are his *Cottage Economy*, his *English Grammar*, and his *History of the Protestant Reformation*. His *Rural Rides* abounds with descriptive passages of great beauty. As a political writer, he was celebrated for the vividness of his expression, the raciness of his diction, the vehemence of his language, and a certain rough vigour of style. It would be difficult to put together more pithy sentences, or more picturesque abuse, than is to be found in many of his attacks—which were also singularly effective from their humour and their personality when directed against his own enemies. Cobbett's instincts were all for bustle and strife, and his life was full of it. The predominant idea that ran through his career was a hatred for tyranny. In spite of all his changes of opinion, he was always to be found fighting on the side of the minority. He was heartily devoted to the interests of his country, and desired beyond all things to see her great and prosperous, and her people healthy, brave and free. The immense number of all his publications sold immediately on their appearance proves the popularity of his style. Cobbett himself said that 'his popularity was owing to his giving truth in clear language,' and his writings have always the merit of rendering his meaning with perfect precision.



### 1. The Institution of Property.

Thus, then, we see that labour must have been the foundation of all property. Mr. Tull, who was a very learned lawyer, as well as the greatest writer on agriculture that ever lived, claimed an exclusive right to the produce of his book, because he had written it,—because it was something proceeding from the labour of his own mind; and thereupon he says, ‘There is no property of any description, if it be rightfully held, which had not its foundation in labour.’ And it must have been thus, because men never could have been so foolish, so lost to all sense of self-preservation, as to suffer a few persons, comparatively, to take possession of the whole earth, which God had given to all of them for a common possession, unless these comparatively few persons had first performed, or their progenitors had performed, some labour upon these several spots of earth, the like of which labour, or a part of which labour, had not been performed by men in general.

When the earth came to be more peopled than it had been for a long time, the common benefit of all demanded that some agreement should be entered into, which would secure to the possessors of particular parcels of land the exclusive possession and enjoyment of them and of their fruits, and that there should be laws to protect them in that enjoyment. When this state of things came, it was called civil society; and laws, made by the common assent of any community of men, came to supply the place of the law of nature. These laws of civil society restrained individuals from following, in certain cases, the dictates of their own will; they protected the industrious against the depredations of the lazy; they protected the weak against the violence of

the unjust strong; they secured men in possession of land, houses, and goods, that were called 'theirs.' The words 'mine' and 'thine,' which mean 'my own' and 'thy own,' were invented to designate what we now call a property in things; the meaning of the word 'property' being this, that the thing is a man's own, or the own of a body of men; and that no other man, or body of men, have any right to partake in the possession, the use, or the fruits of it. The law necessarily makes it criminal in one man to take away or injure the property of another man. It was, even before this law of civil society, a crime against natural justice to do certain things against our neighbour; to kill him, to wound him, to slander him, to expose him to suffer from want of food, or raiment, or shelter. These and many other things were crimes in the eye of the law of nature; but, to take a share of a man's victuals or clothing, to insist upon sharing a part of the good things that he might happen to have in his possession, could be no crime, because there was no positive property in anything, except in a man's body itself or, at most, in such things as he had in his immediate possession and use, or as had been produced by his labour or that of his children. For instance, a hare, a pheasant, a deer, that he had caught; beer or wine that he had made; raiment that he had made; or a dwelling-place that he had built.—*Rural Rides.*

## 2. The National Debt and Foreign Politics in 1826.

I KNOW nothing of the politics of the Bourbons; but, though I can easily conceive that they would not like to see an end of the paper system and a consequent Reform, in England; though I can see very good reasons for believing this, I do not believe that Canning will induce them to

sacrifice their own obvious and immediate interests for the sake of preserving our funding system. He will not get them out of Cadiz, and he will not induce them to desist from interfering in the affairs of Portugal, if they find it their interest to interfere. They know, that we cannot go to war. They know this as well as we do; and every sane person in England seems to know it well. No war for us without Reform! We are come to this at last. No war with this Debt; and this Debt defies every power but that of Reform. Foreign nations were, as to our real state, a good deal enlightened by 'late panic.' They had hardly any notion of our state before that. That opened their eyes, and led them to conclusions that they never before dreamed of. It made them see that that which they had always taken for a mountain of solid gold, was only a great heap of rubbishy, rotten paper! And they now, of course, estimate us accordingly. But it signifies not what they think, or what they do, unless they will subscribe and pay off this Debt for the people at Whitehall. The foreign governments (not excepting the American) all hate the English Reformers; those of Europe, because our example would be so dangerous to despots; and that of America, because we should not suffer it to build fleets and to add to its territories at pleasure. So that, we have not only our own borough-mongers and tax-eaters against us; but also all foreign governments. Not a straw, however, do we care for them all, so long as we have for us the ever-living, ever-watchful, ever-efficient, and all-subduing Debt! Let our foes subscribe, I say, and pay off that Debt; for until they do that, we snap our fingers at them.—*Letter on the National Debt.*

### 3. Woodland Countries.

I CANNOT quit Battle without observing, that the country is very pretty all about it. All hill, or valley. A great deal of wood-land, in which the underwood is generally very fine, though the oaks are not very fine, and a good deal covered with moss. This shows that the clay ends before the tap-root of the oak gets as deep as it would go: for, when the clay goes the full depth, the oaks are always fine.—The woods are too large and too near each other for hare-hunting; and, as to coursing, it is out of the question here. But it is a fine country for shooting and for harbouring game of all sorts.—It was rainy as I came home; but the woodmen were at work. A great many hop-poles are cut here, which makes the coppices more valuable than in many other parts. The women work in the coppices, shaving the bark of the hop-poles, and, indeed, at various other parts of the business.—Little boys and girls shave hop-poles and assist in other coppice work very nicely. And it is pleasant work when the weather is dry over head. The woods, bedded with leaves as they are, are clean and dry under foot. They are warm, too, even in the coldest weather. When the ground is frozen several inches deep in the open fields, it is scarcely frozen at all in a coppice where the underwood is a good plant, and where it is nearly high enough to cut. So that the woodman's is really a pleasant life. We are apt to think that the birds have a hard time of it in winter. But we forget the warmth of the woods, which far exceeds anything to be found in farm yards. When Sidmouth started me from my farm, in 1817, I had just planted my farm yard round with a pretty coppice. But, never mind, Sidmouth and I shall, I dare say, have plenty of

time and occasion to talk about that coppice, and many other things, before we die. And, can I, when I think of these things now, pity those to whom Sidmouth owed his power of starting me!—But let me forget the subject for this time at any rate.—Woodland countries are interesting on many accounts. Not so much on account of their masses of green leaves, as on account of the variety of sights and sounds and incidents that they afford. Even in winter the coppices are beautiful to the eye, while they comfort the mind with the idea of shelter and warmth. In spring they change their hue from day to day during two whole months, which is about the time from the first appearance of the delicate leaves of the birch to the full expansion of those of the ash; and, even before the leaves come at all to intercept the view, what in the vegetable creation is so delightful to behold as the bed of a coppice bespangled with primroses and bluebells? The opening of the birch leaves is the signal for the pheasant to begin to crow, for the blackbird to whistle, and the thrush to sing; and, just when the oak-buds begin to look reddish, and not a day before, the whole tribe of finches burst forth in songs from every bough, while the lark, imitating them all, carries the joyous sounds to the sky. These are amongst the means which Providence has benignantly appointed to sweeten the toils by which food and raiment are produced; these the English ploughman could once hear without the sorrowful reflection that he himself was a pauper, and that the bounties of nature had, for him, been scattered in vain! And shall he never see an end to this state of things! Shall he never have the due reward of his labour! Shall unsparing taxation never cease to make him a miserable dejected being, a creature famishing in the midst of abundance, fainting, expiring with hunger's feeble moans, surrounded by a carolling creation! O! accursed

paper-money! Has hell a torment surpassing the wickedness of thy inventor!—*Rural Rides.*

#### 4. The Pot-shop, A Fable.

IN a pot-shop, well stocked with wares of all sorts, a discontented, ill-formed pitcher unluckily bore the sway. One day, after the mortifying neglect of several customers, 'Gentlemen,' said he, addressing himself to his brown brethren in general—'gentlemen, with your permission, we are a set of tame fools, without ambition, without courage, condemned to the vilest uses; we suffer all without murmuring; let us dare to declare ourselves, and we shall soon see the difference. That superb ewer, which, like us, is but earth—these gilded jurs, vases, china, and, in short, all those elegant nonsenses whose colour and beauty have neither weight nor solidity—must yield to our strength and give place to our superior merit.' This civic harangue was received with applause, and the pitcher, chosen president, became the organ of the assembly. Some, however, more moderate than the rest, attempted to calm the minds of the multitude; but all the vulgar utensils, which shall be nameless, were become intractable. Eager to vie with the bowls and the cups, they were impatient, almost to madness, to quit their obscure abodes to shine upon the table, kiss the lip, and ornament the cupboard.

In vain did a wise water-jug—some say it was a platter—make them a long and serious discourse upon the utility of their vocation. 'Those,' said he, 'who are destined to great employments are rarely the most happy. We are all of the same clay, 'tis true, but He who made us formed us for different functions; one is for ornament, another for use. The posts the least important are often the most necessary.

Our employments are extremely different, and so are our talents.'

This had a most wonderful effect; the most stupid began to open their ears; perhaps it would have succeeded, if a grease-pot had not cried out in a decisive tone: 'You reason like an ass—to the devil with you and your silly lessons.' Now the scale was turned again: all the horde of pans and pitchers applauded the superior eloquence and reasoning of the grease-pot. In short, they determined on an enterprise; but a dispute arose—who should be the chief? Every one would command, but no one obey. It was then you might have heard a clatter; all put themselves in motion at once, and so wisely and with so much vigour were their operations conducted, that the whole was soon changed—not into china, but into rubbish. —*Priestley's Emigration.*

### 5. Cobbett's Childhood.

AT eleven years of age my employment was clipping of box-edgings and weeding beds of flowers in the garden of the Bishop of Winchester at the castle of Farnham, my native town. I had always been fond of beautiful gardens, and a gardener who had just come from the King's gardens at Kew gave me such a description of them as made me instantly resolve to work in those gardens. The next morning (this is the early adventure I have previously spoken of), without saying a word to any one, off I set, with no clothes except those upon my back, and with thirteen halfpence in my pocket. I found that I must go to Richmond, and I accordingly went on from place to place inquiring my way thither. A long day (it was in June)\*brought me to Richmond in the afternoon. Two pennyworth of bread and cheese and a pennyworth of small beer which I had on the

road, and one halfpenny that I had lost somehow or other, left three pence in my pocket. With this for my whole fortune, I was trudging through Richmond in my blue smock-frock, and my red garters tied under my knees, when, staring about me, my eye fell upon a little book in a book-seller's window, on the outside of which was written, 'The Tale of a Tub, price 3d.' The title was so odd that my curiosity was excited. I had the threepence; but then I could not have any supper. In I went and got the little book, which I was so impatient to read, that I got over into a field at the upper corner of Kew Gardens, where there stood a haystack. On the shady side of this I sat down to read. The book was so different from anything that I had ever read before, it was something so new to my mind, that, though I could not understand some parts of it, it delighted me beyond description, and produced what I have always considered a sort of birth of intellect.

I read on until it was dark without any thought of supper or bed. When I could see no longer, I put my little book in my pocket and tumbled down by the side of the stack, where I slept till the birds in the Kew Gardens awakened me in the morning, when off I started to Kew, reading my little book. The singularity of my dress, the simplicity of my manner, my lively and confident air, and doubtless his own compassion besides, induced the gardener, who was a Scotchman, I remember, to give me victuals, find me lodging, and set me to work; and it was during the period that I was at Kew that George IV. and two of his brothers laughed at the oddness of my dress while I was sweeping the grass-plot round the foot of the Pagoda. The gardener, seeing me fond of books, lent me some gardening books to read; but these I could not relish after my 'Tale of a Tub,' which I carried about with me wherever I went, and when



I—at about twenty years old—lost it in a box that fell overboard in the Bay of Fundy, in North America; the loss gave me greater pain than I have since felt at losing thousands of pounds.—*Letter to the Evening Post*, 1820.

### 6. In Newgate.

Now, then, the book-learning was forced upon us. I had a farm in hand; it was necessary that I should be constantly informed of what was doing. I gave all the orders, whether as to purchases, sales, ploughing, sowing, breeding—in short, with regard to everything, and the things were in endless number and variety, and always full of interest. My eldest son and daughter could now write well and fast. One or the other of these was always at Botley, and I had with me—having hired the best part of the keeper's house—one or two besides, either their brother or sister. We had a hamper, with a lock and two keys, which came up once a week or oftener, bringing me fruit and all sorts of country fare. This hamper, which was always at both ends of the line looked for with the most lively interest, became our school. It brought me a journal of labours, proceedings, and occurrences, written on paper of shape and size uniform, and so contrived as to margins as to admit of binding. The journal used, when my eldest son was the writer, to be interspersed with drawings of our dogs, colts, or anything that he wanted me to have a correct idea of. The hamper brought me plants, herbs, and the like, that I might see the size of them; and almost every one sent his or her most beautiful flowers, the earliest violets and primroses and cowslips and blue-bells, the earliest twigs of trees, and, in short, everything that they thought calculated to delight me. The moment the hamper arrived, I—casting aside everything else—set to

work to answer every question, to give new directions, and to add anything likely to give pleasure at Botley.

Every hamper brought one letter, as they called it, if not more, from every child, and to every letter I wrote an answer, sealed up and sent to the party, being sure that that was the way to produce other and better letters; for though they could not read what I wrote, and though their own consisted at first of mere scratches, and afterwards, for a while, of a few words written down for them to imitate, I always thanked them for their pretty letter, and never expressed any wish to see them write better, but took care to write in a very neat and plain hand myself, and to do up my letter in a very neat manner.

Thus, while the ferocious tigers thought I was doomed to incessant mortification, and to rage that must extinguish my mental powers. I found in my children, and in their spotless and courageous and affectionate mother, delights to which the callous hearts of those tigers were strangers. 'Heaven first taught letters for some wretch's aid.' How often did this line of Pope occur to me when I opened the little fuddling letters from Botley. This correspondence occupied a good part of my time. I had all the children with me, turn and turn about; and in order to give the boys exercise, and to give the two eldest an opportunity of beginning to learn French, I used for a part of the two years to send them for a few hours a day to an abbé, who lived in Castle Street, Holborn. All this was a great relaxation to my mind; and when I had to return to my literary labours, I returned fresh and cheerful, full of vigour, and full of hope of finally seeing my unjust and merciless foes at my feet, and that, too, without caring a straw on whom their fall might bring calamity, so that my own family were safe, because—say what any one might—the community, taken as a whole, had suffered this thing to be done unto us.

The paying of the workpeople, the keeping of the accounts, the referring to books, the writing and reading of letters, this everlasting mixture of amusement with book-learning, made me, almost to my own surprise, find at the end of two years that I had a parcel of scholars growing up about me, and, long before the end of the time, I had dictated my *Register* to my two eldest children. Then there was copying out of books, which taught spelling correctly. The calculations about the farming affairs forced arithmetic upon us; the *use*, the *necessity* of the thing, led to the study.

By and by we had to look into the laws, to know what to do about the highways, about the game, about the poor, and all rural and parochial affairs.

I was, indeed, by the fangs of government defeated in my fondly-cherished project of making my sons farmers on their own land, and keeping them from all temptation to seek vicious and enervating enjoyments; but those fangs—merciless as they had been—had not been able to prevent me from laying in for their lives, a store of useful information, habits of industry, care, and sobriety, and a taste for innocent, hea'thful, and manly pleasures. The fiends had made me and them penniless, but had not been able to take from us our health, or our mental possessions, and these were ready for application as circumstances might ordain.—*Evening Post*, 1820.

#### 7. Monastic Institutions.

Nor must we by any means overlook the effects of these institutions on the mere face of the country. That man must be low and mean of soul who is insensible to all feeling of pride in the noble edifices of his country. Love of country, that variety of feelings which altogether constitute what we properly call patriotism, consist in part of the admi-

ration of, and veneration for, ancient and magnificent proofs of skill and opulence. The monastics built as well as wrote for posterity. The never-dying nature of their institutions set aside in all their undertakings every calculation as to time and age. Whether they built or planted, they set the generous example of providing for the pleasure, the honour, the wealth, and greatness of generations upon generations yet unborn. They executed everything in the very best manner; their gardens, fishponds, farms, were as near perfection as they could make them; in the whole of their economy they set an example tending to make the country beautiful, to make it an object of pride with the people, and to make the nation truly and permanently great.

Go into any county and survey, even at this day, the ruins of its, perhaps, twenty abbeys and priories, and then ask yourself, 'What have we in exchange for these?' Go to the site of some once opulent convent. Look at the cloister, now become in the hands of some rack-renter the receptacle for dung, fodder, and fagot-wood. See the hall, where for ages the widow, the orphan, the aged, and the stranger found a table ready spread. See a bit of its walls now helping to make a cattle-shed, the rest having been hauled away to build a workhouse. Recognise on the side of a barn, a part of the once magnificent chapel; and, if chained to the spot by your melancholy musings, you be admonished of the approach of night by the voice of the screech-owl issuing from those arches which once at the same hour resounded with the vespers of the monk, and which have for seven hundred years been assailed by storms and tempests in vain; if thus admonished of the necessity of seeking food, shelter, and a bed, lift up your eyes and look at the whitewashed and dry-rotten shed on the hill, called the 'Gentleman's House,' and apprised of the 'board

wages' and 'spring guns,' which are the signs of his hospitality, turn your head, jog away from the scene of former comfort and grandeur; and with old-English welcoming in your mind, reach the nearest inn, and there, in a room, half-warm and half-lighted, with a reception precisely proportioned to the presumed length of your purse, sit down and listen to an account of the hypocritical pretences, the base motives, the tyrannical and bloody means, under which, from which, and by which, the ruin you have been witnessing was effected, and the hospitality you have lost was for ever banished from the land.—*History of the Protestant Reformation.*

### 8. The State of Ireland.

WHY should Ireland be in a state of semi-barbarism? Why should it be in a state to render *necessary* such laws as we have seen above described, and such treatment as we have, alas! all heard of. 'Traitors!' Yes, poor Ireland has had traitors indeed; but these traitors are men who have calumniated her for the purpose of serving their own interested and base purposes; these are the true Irish Traitors.

Ireland took the lead of England in civilization; she has a better climate and a more fertile soil; she has harbours, rivers, all the natural advantages that England possesses, and in a greater proportion. Her people are naturally robust, brave, generous, and full of genius and spirit. I observed before how conspicuously this was proved by their success and influence in the American States. There, where *all nations meet*, without any preference; where they all enter the lists of talents, industry, and enterprise; there, where all have 'a clear stage and no favour,' the Irish have obtained a decided predominance, notwithstanding the wretched plight

in which they generally make their entry, notwithstanding the far greater part of them are, at first, bondmen and bondwomen, and thus have to work for years to pay off the debt which the misery of Ireland had imposed upon them. We see grants made annually out of the public money to make roads and bridges and canals in the *Highlands of Scotland*, for the avowed purpose of *creating*, in that most sterile of all countries, *labour* in order to *prevent the people from emigrating*. And, while we are doing this, we see, in every two or three years, as many people emigrate from Ireland as *the whole population* of the Highlands amounts to! Is this a mark of wisdom? Was there ever any thing so directly in the teeth of reason as this?

Why not do something to keep the Irish at home? It is *certain* that people will not voluntarily quit their native soil if they be happy, or only tolerably comfortable there. This is *certain*, and we, though very unwisely in my opinion, are taxing one part of the kingdom to *make work* for people in another part (the Highlands) in order to make the people comfortable. But, while this is done, shall we do nothing for the people of Ireland, who do not want our *money*; who want no work *made* for them; but, who have a climate and a soil ready to produce more than they can need?

Am I asked *what* can be done for them, and whether I believe, that granting the claims of the Catholics would do every thing? I answer, that this particular measure would not, in my opinion, do much; but, it would do *something*. It is *one* of the things that should be done, and, as it would not cost one single penny beyond the amount of the paper and print of the Act of Parliament, there can be no ground for delaying, other <sup>than</sup> those grounds which have been so often stated, and so often *proved* to be futile.

But, though this measure would be something; though it

would please a great number of persons, and give rise to hope in a greater number, it must be followed by other measures, having a tendency to better the lot of the common people; and, though to effect this must be a work of time, let it be recollected, that *content* would commence with the *commencement* of a better state of things. The patient dates his pleasure from the day when he feels that his cure has *begun*; and, perhaps, the day of his perfect re-establishment does not yield him pleasure so great.

If a people fall into a state like that in which the people of Ireland are, we are not bound to assign the cause. We have a right to assume, that the fault is in the manner of governing the country. Who that has read the observations of intelligent travellers, who that has travelled himself, has not ascribed the misery of a people, where he has found them miserable, to the government and not to the people themselves? Who that has looked over the stock of a farm and seen a parcel of poor, wretched-looking animals, ever thought of ascribing the condition of the stock to any one but the farmer? I do not compare men to beasts; but the cases are exactly similar. And, do not governments themselves recognise this principle in taking credit to themselves for the prosperity of the people, which they never fail to do when they can? Indeed, it is to the *laws* of a state, as well as to the *rules* in a family, that we are to look for the cause of prosperity or of misery.

Therefore, without entering into any detail, we may ask *why* the people of Ireland are in their present state; *why* they require a regular army to keep down the French factions; *why* they fill every hole and corner in every ship that goes to America; *why* they go to cultivate the lands and to add to population, the talents and the power of other countries? We have a right to ask of our rulers, *why* these

things are, and to call upon them to put an end to their existence.

I have always thought, that the measure of Catholic emancipation, as it is called, should be followed by others of far more extensive effect.—*Political Register*, 1811.

### 9. The British Soldier.

To the army, to every soldier in it, I have a bond of attachment quite independent of any *political* reasonings or considerations. I have been a soldier myself, and for no small number of years, at that time of life when the feelings are most ardent and when the strongest attachments are formed. 'Once a soldier always a soldier,' is a maxim, the truth of which I need not insist on to any one who has ever served in the army for any length of time, and especially if the service he has seen has embraced those scenes and occasions where every man, first or last, from one cause or another, owes the preservation of his all, health and life not excepted, to the kindness, the generosity, the fellow feeling, of his comrades. A community of monks hate one another, because they are compelled to live together, and do not stand in need of each other's voluntary assistance in the procuring of the things necessary to health and life. It is precisely the contrary with soldiers. And, a soldier has not only a regard of all the men of his own corps, but, in a degree a little fainter, for all the soldiers in the army. Nay, the soldiers of two hostile armies have a feeling of friendship for each other; and, this feeling and the acts arising from it, have, when occasion has offered, always been found to exist in proportion to the bravery with which they have fought against each other.

Of this military feeling I do not believe that any man ever



possessed a greater portion than myself. I was eight years in the army, during which time I associated less with people out of the army than any soldier that I ever knew. This partiality I have always retained. I like soldiers, as a class in life, better than any other description of men. Their conversation is more pleasing to me; they have generally seen more than other men; they have less of vulgar prejudice about them; to which may be added, that, having felt hardships themselves, they know how to feel for others. This does not, indeed, apply but to those who have seen service, or who depend solely upon their merit for their success. Amongst soldiers, less than amongst any other description of men, have I observed the vices of *lying* and *hypocrisy*. I do not recollect a single instance of a soldier in any corps, having betrayed, or given up, or exposed, another soldier, even for the sake of saving himself from most terrible punishment; and, as for selfishness, a soldier, who would not give his dinner, his day's provisions, to a comrade in want, would be looked upon as an unnatural brute. It is not to be expected that such generosity of feeling should be found amongst the mass of mankind: those who have not known the vicissitudes and the many wants of the soldier's life, cannot be expected to have the soldier's feeling: I have known the one, and I possess the other; and, notwithstanding I have now been accused of hankering after nothing but '*base lucre*,' upon this feeling I have always acted. Aye, and upon this feeling I shall have been known to have acted, too, in spite of all that can be done to misrepresent me to the army. . . .

Lover as I am of '*base lucre*,' no soul in distress was ever sent empty from my door, be the cause of that distress what it might. But, to soldiers, and their wives and children; to every creature bearing the name or mark or sign of military

service about it, I, nor any one belonging to me, ever omitted to show particular marks of compassion and kindness. I wish the public could now pass in review before them all the unfortunate soldiers that have come to my door and those who have been to the door of the man who has called me the '*traducer*' of the army. Would to God that this exhibition could take place, and that an inquiry could be made as to the reception that each had met with! I should not be afraid of the comparison, though he represents me as the *enemy of the army*; as a man whom *the army calls upon the Judges to punish*.

Late in October, or early in November last, returning home in the dusk of the evening, I found our village full of soldiers. There were about *five hundred* men (a number nearly equal to the whole population of the parish), who had arrived at Portsmouth, last from Portugal; many of whom had been at the battle of Talavera, and had served in both the arduous and fatal campaigns in Spain; and most of whom had suffered either from sickness or from wounds actually received in battle. These men, who had *landed at Portsmouth that same morning*, had marched *eighteen miles* to Botley, where they found for their accommodation *one small Inn and three Public-houses*. All the *beds* in the whole village, and in the whole parish to its utmost limits, including the bed of every cottager, would not have lodged these men and their wives and children, and all the *victuals* in the parish would not, of course, have furnished them with a single meal, without taking from the meals of the people of the parish. The stables, barns, and every other place, in which a man could lie down out of the way of actual rain, were prepared with straw. Every body in the village was ready to give up all his room to these people, whose every garment and limb and feature bespoke the misery they had undergone. It was

rather unfortunate that both myself and my wife were from home when they arrived in the village, or I should have lodged a company or two of the privates at least. I found the greater part of them already gone to their straw lodging, and, therefore, I could do nothing for them; but, I brought two of the officers (the Commanding Officer and another) to my house, not having spare beds for any more, upon so short a notice. The next day, which happened to be a Sunday, the whole of the officers, thirteen or fourteen in number, lived at my house the whole of the day; and of all my whole life, during which I have spent but very few unpleasant days, I never spent so pleasant a day as that. After a lapse of sixteen years, I once more saw myself at table with nothing but soldiers; nothing but men in red coats; and I felt so happy at being able to give them proofs of my attachment. I never, upon any occasion, so much enjoyed, never so sensibly felt, the benefits of having been industrious and economical. My guests, on their part, soon found that they were at home, and gave full scope to that disposition to gaiety, which prevails amongst soldiers, and particularly after long-endured hardships. It was the first whole day of their being in England from the time they had quitted it; and certain I am, that not a man of them has since seen a happier. On the Monday morning, before day-light, my whole family, children and all, were up to prepare them a breakfast, and to bid them farewell; and, when they left us, the Commanding Officer, who was a modest and sensible Scotchman, observed, that he had, in his life, *heard* much of English hospitality, but that, at Botley, he had *seen* and *felt* it.—*Political Register*, 1810.

# 10. To the Labouring Classes of this Kingdom.

ECONOMY means, *management*, and nothing more; and it is generally applied to the affairs of a house and family, which affairs are an object of the greatest importance, whether as relating to individuals or to a nation. A nation is made powerful and honoured in the world not so much by the number of its people as by the ability and character of that people; and the ability and character of a people depend, in a great measure, upon the *economy* of the several families which, all taken together, make up the nation. There never yet was, and never will be, a nation *permanently great*, consisting, for the greater part, of wretched and miserable families. . . .

*Education* means *breeding up, bringing up, or rearing up*; and nothing more. This includes every thing with regard to the *mind* as well as the *body* of the child; but, of late years, it has been so used as to have no sense applied to it but that of *book-learning*, with which, nine times out of ten, it has nothing at all to do. . . .

The *education* that I have in view is, therefore, of a very different kind. You should bear constantly in mind, that nine tenths of us are, from the very nature and necessities of the world, born to gain our livelihood by the sweat of our brow. What reason have we, then, to presume, that our children are not to do the same? If they be, as now and then one will be, endued with extraordinary powers of mind, those powers may have an opportunity of developing themselves; and, if they never have that opportunity, the harm is not very great to us or to them. Nor does it hence follow, that the descendants of labourers are *always* to be labourers. The path upwards is steep and long, to be sure. Industry,

care, skill, excellence in the present parent lays the foundation of a *rise*, under more favourable circumstances, for his children. The children of these take *another rise*; and, by and by, the descendants of the present labourer become gentlemen.

This is the natural progress. It is by attempting to reach the top at a *single leap* that so much misery is produced in the world; and the propensity to make such attempts has been cherished and encouraged by the strange projects that we have witnessed of late years for making the labourers *virtuous* and *happy* by giving them what is called *education*. The education which I speak of consists in bringing children up to labour with *steadiness*, with *care*, and with *skill*; to show them how to do as many useful things as possible; to teach them to do them all in the best manner; to set them an example in industry, sobriety, cleanliness, and neatness; to make all these *habitual* to them, so that they never shall be liable to fall into the contrary; to let them always see a *good living* proceeding from *labour*, and thus to remove from them the temptation to get at the goods of others by violent or fraudulent means, and to keep far from their minds all the inducements to hypocrisy and deceit.

And, bear in mind, that, if the state of the labourer has its disadvantages when compared with other callings and conditions of life, it has also its advantages. It is free from the torments of ambition, and from a great part of the causes of ill-health, for which not all the riches in the world and all the circumstances of high rank are a compensation. The able and prudent labourer is always *safe*, at the least, and that is what few men are who are lifted above him. They have losses and crosses to fear, the very thought of which never enters his mind, if he act well his part towards himself, his family and his neighbour.

But, the basis of good to him, is, *steady and skilful labour*.  
*—Introduction to Cottage Economy.*

## 11. English Composition.

LANGUAGE is made use of for one of three purposes; namely, to *inform*, to *convince*, or to *persuade*. The first, requiring merely the talent of telling what we know, is a matter of little difficulty. The second demands *reasoning*. The third, besides reasoning, demands all the aid that we can obtain from the use of figures of speech, or, as they are sometimes called, *figures of rhetorick*, which last word means, the power of persuasion.

Whatever may be the purpose, for which we use language, it seldom can happen that we do not stand in need of more than one sentence; and, therefore, others must be added. There is no precise *rule*; there can be no precise rule, with regard to the manner of doing this. When we have said one thing, we must add another; and so on, until we have said all that we have to say. But, we ought to take care, and great care, that, if any words in a sentence relate, in any way, to words that have *gone before*, we make these words correspond grammatically with those foregoing words. . . .

The *order* of the matter will be, in almost all cases, that of your thoughts. Sit down to *write what you have thought*, and not to *think what you shall write*. Use the first words that occur to you, and never attempt to *alter a thought*; for, that which has come of itself into your mind is likely to pass into that of another more readily and with more effect than any thing which you can, by reflection, invent.

Never stop to *make choice of words*. Put down your thought in words just as they come. Follow the order which

your thought will point out ; and it will push you on to get it upon the paper as quickly and as clearly as possible.

Thoughts come much faster than we can put them upon paper. They produce one another ; and, this order of their coming is, in almost every case, the best possible order that they can have on paper : yet, if you have several in your mind, rising above each other in point of force, the most forcible will naturally come the last upon paper.

Mr. Lindley Murray gives *rules* about *long sentences* and *short sentences* and about *a due mixture* of long and short ; and, he also gives rules about the *letters* that sentences should *begin* with and the *syllables* that they should *end* with. Such rules might be very well if we were to *sing* our writing ; but, when the use of writing is to *inform*, to *convince*, or to *persuade*, what can it have to do with such rules ? . . .

A writing, or written discourse, is generally broken into *paragraphs*. When a new paragraph should begin, the nature of your thoughts must tell you. The propriety of it will be pointed out to you by the difference between the thoughts which are coming and those which have gone before. It is impossible to frame rules for regulating such divisions. When a man divides his work into Parts, Books, Chapters, and Sections, he makes the divisions according to that which the matter has taken in his mind ; and, when he comes to write, he has no other guide for the distribution of his matter into sentences and paragraphs.

*Never write about any matter that you do not well understand.* If you clearly understand all about your matter, you will never want thoughts, and thoughts instantly become words.

One of the greatest of all faults in writing and in speaking is this ; the using of many words to *say little*. In order to guard yourself against this fault, inquire what is the *substance*,

or *amount* of what you have said. Take a long speech of some talking Lord, and put down upon paper what the *amount* of it is. You will mostly find, that the amount is very small: but, at any rate, when you get it, you will then be able to examine it, and to tell what it is worth. A very few examinations of this sort will so frighten you, that you will be for ever after upon your guard against *talking a great deal and saying little*.

*Figurative language* is very fine when properly employed; but, figures of rhetorick are edge tools and two-edge tools too. Take care how you touch them! They are called *figures*, because they represent other things than the words in their literal meaning stand for. For instance: 'The tyrants oppress and starve the people. The people would live amidst abundance, if those *cormorants* did not devour the fruit of their labour.' I shall only observe to you upon this subject, that, if you use figures of rhetorick, you ought to take care that they do not make nonsense of what you say; nor excite the ridicule of those to whom you write. Mr. Murray, in an address to his students tells them, that he is about to offer them some advice with regard to 'their future *walks* in the *paths* of literature.' Now, though a man may *take a walk* along a *path*, a walk means also *the ground* laid out in a certain shape, and such a walk is *wider than a path*. He, in another part of this address, tells them, that they are in 'the *morning* of life, and that is the *season* for exertion.' The morning, my dear James, is *not a season*. The *year*, indeed, has seasons, but the *day* has none. If he had said the *spring* of life, then he might have added the *season* of exertion. I told you they were *edge-tools*. Beware of them.—*English Grammar, a Series of Letters.*



## L.

### SIR WALTER SCOTT.

1771—1832.

WALTER SCOTT was born on Aug. 15, 1771, at Edinburgh, where his father was a writer to the Signet. A lameness which seized him in infancy and lasted through life caused his removal to the country, where in his grandfather's farmhouse of Sandyknowe, beneath the crags of a ruined baronial tower, and surrounded by spots famous in border history, his childhood was passed. Here his sympathy with the beauty and grandeur of nature was roused, and his delight kindled in ballads and legends told to him amid the scenes where the deeds they recorded were done. At eight he returned to Edinburgh, to enter the High School. Here severe illness interrupted his education, and by throwing him upon reading as a resource gave the colour to his subsequent life. He says of a library founded by Allan Ramsay, 'I believe I read almost all the romances, old plays, and epic poetry of that formidable collection.' Many of the friends of his home had taken part in the stirring events of Scottish history in the middle of the century, and their presence and conversation carried him back to a state of society which had ceased to exist. In 1786 he was able to commence his apprenticeship as writer to the Signet.

In 1792 he was called to the bar. In 1799 he was appointed Sheriff of Selkirkshire, and in 1806 Clerk of the Court of Session.

Scott's earliest attempts at writing were translations from the German, but in 1805 he published the *Lay of the Last Minstrel*, which was quickly followed by *Marmion*, the *Lady of the Lake*, and several other pieces. In 1808 he brought out an edition of Dryden's works, which is still a standard one. In 1814 he made his first venture in prose in *Waverley*, which was published anonymously. Its success was immediate and unparalleled. During the few

years that followed the brilliant series of novels which was thus commenced was poured from the press with the most astonishing rapidity.

In 1820 the author, whose identity was by this time tacitly acknowledged, was created a Baronet by George IV, in recognition of his genius. The commercial crisis of 1825 brought ruin on Scott through the failure of his publishers, Constable and Ballantyne, with whom he was in partnership. Scott bore up bravely under the crushing blow, and the *History of Napoleon* was written to help to meet the demands of his creditors; but his health gave way, and their claims were only fully satisfied by the sale of his collected works after his death. Scott's life was on the whole a singularly happy one, though its last years were spent, and his declining strength wasted, in a fruitless struggle to bear up against these commercial difficulties.

He died at his seat of Abbotsford, Sept. 21, 1832, and is buried at Dryburgh.

As a poet, Sir Walter Scott stands not in the first rank, but very high in the second. No poet of modern times has so nearly caught the ancient Homeric fervour of narrative in verse. As a writer of prose fiction he stands at the head of English novelists. There is no one in this class who, either in the delineation of characters or the construction of plots, has trod so nearly, though at a long interval, in the footsteps of Shakspeare. Of the historical romance he may be considered the inventor. In his mixture of pathos and humour, especially in the Scottish characters, in his power of reproducing the general effect of the scenes of the past, though often with much inaccuracy in detail, he is unrivalled. By the healthy and elevating influence of his works, he has probably done more to purify English literature than any writer since Addison. His power of interesting his readers, both as a poet and as a prose writer, is almost unbounded; but his style suffered from his fertility, and will not stand the test of a critical examination. His love for mediæval antiquity, of which the first example was his collection of the *Border Minstrelsy*, was probably the fountain-head of all his other works, and places him foremost amongst the restorers of that taste.

1. *Sunset in a Storm.*

THE sun was now resting his huge disk upon the edge of the level ocean, and gilded the accumulation of towering clouds through which he had travelled the livelong day, and which now assembled on all sides, like misfortunes and disasters around a sinking empire and falling monarch. Still, however, his dying splendour gave a sombre magnificence to the massive congregation of vapours, forming out of their unsubstantial gloom the show of pyramids and towers, some touched with gold, some with purple, some with a hue of deep and dark red. The distant sea, stretched beneath this varied and gorgeous canopy, lay almost portentously still, reflecting back the dazzling and level beams of the descending luminary, and the splendid colouring of the clouds amidst which he was setting. Nearer to the beach the tide rippled onward in waves of sparkling silver, that imperceptibly, yet rapidly, gained upon the sand.

With a mind employed in admiration of the romantic scene, or perhaps on some more agitating topic, Miss Wardour advanced in silence by her father's side, whose recently offended dignity did not stoop to open any conversation. Following the windings of the beach, they passed one projecting point or headland of rock after another, and now found themselves under a huge and continued extent of the precipices by which that iron-bound coast is in most places defended. Long projecting reefs of rock, extending under water, and only evincing their existence by here and there a peak entirely bare, or by the breakers which foamed over those that were partially covered, rendered Knock-winnock bay dreaded by pilots and ship-masters. The crags which rose between the beach and the mainland, to the height of two or three hundred feet, afforded in their

crevices shelter for unnumbered sea-fowl, in situations seemingly secured by their dizzy height from the rapacity of man. Many of these wild tribes, with the instinct which sends them to seek the land before a storm arises, were now winging towards their nests with the shrill and dissonant clang which announces disquietude and fear. The disk of the sun became almost totally obscured ere he had altogether sunk below the horizon, and an early and lurid shade of darkness blotted the serene twilight of a summer evening. The wind began next to arise; but its wild and moaning sound was heard for some time, and its effects became visible on the bosom of the sea, before the gale was felt on shore. The mass of waters, now dark and threatening, began to lift itself in larger ridges, and sink in deeper furrows, forming waves that rose high in foam upon the breakers, or burst upon the beach with a sound resembling distant thunder.—*The Antiquary.*

## 2. The Discovery of the Tomb of Robert the Bruce.

SUCH of the Scottish knights as remained alive returned to their own country. They brought back the heart of the Bruce, and the bones of the good Lord James. These last were interred in the church of St. Bride, where Thomas Dickson and Douglas held so terrible a Palm Sunday. The Bruce's heart was buried below the high altar in Melrose Abbey. As for his body, it was laid in the sepulchre in the midst of the church of Dunfermline, under a marble stone. But the church becoming afterwards ruinous, and the roof falling down with age, the monument was broken to pieces, and nobody could tell where it stood. But a little while ago, when they were repairing the church at Dunfermline, and removing the rubbish, lo! they found fragments of the

marble tomb of Robert Bruce. Then they began to dig farther, thinking to discover the body of this celebrated monarch; and at length they came to the skeleton of a tall man, and they knew it must be that of King Robert, both as he was known to have been buried in a winding sheet of cloth of gold, of which many fragments were found about this skeleton, and also because the breastbone appeared to have been sawn through, in order to take out the heart. So orders were sent from the King's Court of Exchequer to guard the bones carefully, until a new tomb should be prepared, into which they were laid with profound respect. A great many gentlemen and ladies attended, and almost all the common people in the neighbourhood; and as the church could not hold half the numbers, the people were allowed to pass through it, one after another, that each one, the poorest as well as the richest, might see all that remained of the great King Robert Bruce, who restored the Scottish monarchy. Many people shed tears; for there was the wasted skull which once was the head that thought so wisely and boldly for his country's deliverance; and there was the dry bone which had once been the sturdy arm that killed Sir Henry de Bohun, between the two armies, at a single blow, on the evening before the battle of Bannockburn.

It is more than five hundred years since the body of Bruce was first laid into the tomb; and how many many millions of men have died since that time, whose bones could not be recognised, nor their names known, any more than those of inferior animals! It was a great thing to see that the wisdom, courage, and patriotism of a King, could preserve him for such a long time in the memory of the people over whom he once reigned. But then, my dear child, you must remember, that it is only desirable to be remembered for

praiseworthy and patriotic actions, such as those of Robert Bruce. It would be better for a prince to be forgotten like the meanest peasant, than to be recollected for actions of tyranny or oppression.—*Tales of a Grandfather.*

### 3. The Prayer of Louis the Eleventh.

ABOVE the little door, in memory perhaps of the deed which had been done within, was a rude niche, containing a crucifix cut in stone. Upon this emblem the King fixed his eyes, as if about to kneel, but stopped short, as if he applied to the blessed image the principles of worldly policy, and deemed it rash to approach its presence without having secured the private intercession of some supposed favourite. He therefore turned from the crucifix as unworthy to look upon it, and selecting from the images with which, as often mentioned, his hat was completely garnished, a representation of the Lady of Clery, knelt down before it, and made the following extraordinary prayer; in which, it is to be observed, the grossness of his superstition induced him, in some degree, to consider the Virgin of Clery as a different person from the Madonna of Embrun, a favourite idol, to whom he often paid his vows.

‘Sweet Lady of Clery,’ he exclaimed, clasping his hands and beating his breast while he spoke—‘blessed Mother of Mercy! thou who art omnipotent with Omnipotence, have compassion with me a sinner! It is true that I have something neglected thee for thy blessed sister of Embrun; but I am a King, my power is great, my wealth boundless; and, were it otherwise, I would double the *gabelle* on my subjects, rather than not pay my debts to you both. Undo these iron doors—fill up these tremendous moats—lead me, as a mother leads a child, out of this present and pressing

danger! If I have given thy sister the county of Boulogne, to be held of her for ever, have I no means of shewing devotion to thee also? Thou shalt have the broad and rich province of Champagne; and its vineyards shall pour their abundance into thy convent. I had promised the province to my brother Charles; but he, thou knowest, is dead—poisoned by that wicked Abbé of Saint John d'Angely, whom, if I live, I will punish!—I promised this once before, but this time I will keep my word—If I had any knowledge of the crime, believe, dearest patroness, it was because I knew no better method of quieting the discontents of my kingdom. O, do not reckon that old debt to my account to-day; but be, as thou hast ever been, kind, benignant, and easy to be entreated! Sweetest Lady, work with thy child, that he will pardon all past sins, and one— one little deed, which I must do this night— nay, it is no *sin*, dearest Lady of Clery—no sin, but an act of justice privately administered; for the villain is the greatest impostor that ever poured falsehood into a Prince's ear, and leans besides to the filthy heresy of the Greeks. He is not deserving of thy protection; leave him to my care; and hold it as good service that I rid the world of him, for the man is a necromancer and wizard, that is not worth thy thought and care—a dog, the extinction of whose life ought to be of as little consequence in thine eyes, as the treading out a spark that drops from a lamp, or springs from a fire. Think not of this little matter, gentlest, kindest Lady, but only consider how thou canst best aid me in my troubles! and I here bind my royal signet to thy effigy, in token that I will keep word concerning the county of Champagne, and that this shall be the last time I will trouble thee in affairs of blood, knowing thou art so kind, so gentle, and so tender-hearted.'

After this extraordinary contract with the object of his

adoration, Louis recited, apparently with deep devotion, the seven penitential psalms in Latin, and several aves and prayers especially belonging to the service of the Virgin. He then arose, satisfied that he had secured the intercession of the Saint to whom he had prayed, the rather, as he craftily reflected, that most of the sins for which he had requested her mediation on former occasions had been of a different character, and that, therefore, the Lady of Clery was less likely to consider him as a hardened and habitual shedder of blood, than the other saints whom he had more frequently made confidants of his crimes in that respect.—*Quentin Durward*.

#### 4. Before the Reading of the Will.

AT the appointed hour, Mannering went to a small house in the suburbs to the southward of the city, where he found the place of mourning, indicated, as usual in Scotland, by two rueful figures with long black cloaks, white crapes and hat-bands, holding in their hands poles, adorned with melancholy streamers of the same description. By two other mutes, who, from their visages, seemed suffering under the pressure of some strange calamity, he was ushered into the dining-parlour of the defunct, where the company were assembled for the funeral.

In Scotland, the custom, now disused in England, of inviting the relations of the deceased to the interment, is universally retained. On many occasions this has a singular and striking effect, but it degenerates into mere empty form and grimace, in cases where the defunct has had the misfortune to live unbeloved and die unlamented.—The English service for the dead, one of the most beautiful and impressive parts of the ritual of the church, would have, in such cases, the effect of fixing the attention, and uniting the thoughts



and feelings of the audience present, in an exercise of devotion so peculiarly adapted to such an occasion. But, according to the Scottish custom, if there be not real feeling among the assistants, there is nothing to supply the deficiency, and exalt or rouse the attention; so that a sense of tedious form, and almost hypocritical restraint, is too apt to pervade the company assembled for the mournful solemnity. Mrs. Margaret Bertram was unluckily one of those whose good qualities had attached no general friendship. She had no near relations who might have mourned from natural affection, and therefore her funeral exhibited merely the exterior trappings of sorrow.

Mannering, therefore, stood among this lugubrious company of cousins in the third, fourth, fifth, and sixth degree, composing his countenance to the decent solemnity of all who were around him, and looking as much concerned on Mrs. Margaret Bertram's account, as if the deceased lady of Singleside had been his own sister or mother. After a deep and awful pause, the company began to talk aside—under their breaths, however, and as if in the chamber of a dying person.

'Our poor friend,' said one grave gentleman, scarcely opening his mouth, for fear of deranging the necessary solemnity of his features, and sliding his whisper from between his lips, which were as little unclosed as possible,—  
'Our poor friend has died well to pass in the world.'

'Nae doubt,' answered the person addressed, with half-closed eyes; 'poor Mrs. Margaret was aye careful of the gear.'

'Any news to-day, Colonel Mannering?' said one of the gentlemen whom he had dined with the day before, but in a tone which might, for its impressive gravity, have communicated the death of his whole generation.

‘Nothing particular, I believe, sir,’ said Mannering, in the cadence which was, he observed, appropriate to the house of mourning.

‘I understand,’ continued the first speaker, emphatically, and with the air of one who is well informed—‘I understand there *is* a settlement.’

‘And what does little Jenny Gibson get?’

‘A hundred, and the auld repeater.’

‘That’s but sma’ gear, puir thing; she had a sair time o’t with the auld leddy. But it’s ill waiting for dead folk’s shoon.’

‘I am afraid,’ said the politician, who was close by Mannering, ‘we have not done with your old friend Tippoo Saib yet—I doubt he’ll give the Company more plague; and I am told—but you’ll know for certain—that East India Stock is not rising.’

‘I trust it will, sir, soon.’

‘Mrs. Margaret,’ said another person, mingling in the conversation, ‘had some India bonds. I know that, for I drew the interest for her—it would be desirable now for the trustees and legatees to have the Colonel’s advice about the time and mode of converting them into money. For my part I think—But there’s Mr. Mortcloke to tell us they are gaun to lift.’

Mr. Mortcloke the undertaker did accordingly, with a visage of professional length and most grievous solemnity, distribute among the pall-bearers little cards, assigning their respective situations in attendance upon the coffin. As this precedent is supposed to be regulated by propinquity to the defunct, the undertaker, however skilful a master of these lugubrious ceremonies, did not escape giving some offence. To be related to Mrs. Bertram was to be of kin to the lands of Singleside, and was a propinquity of which each relative

present at that moment was particularly jealous. Some murmurs there were on the occasion, and our friend Dinmont gave more open offence, being unable either to repress his discontent, or to utter it in the key properly modulated to the solemnity. 'I think ye might hae at least gi'en me a leg o' her to carry, he exclaimed, in a voice considerably louder than propriety admitted; 'God! an it hadna been for the rigs o' land, I would hae gotten her a' to carry mysell, for as mony gentles as are here.'

A score of frowning and reproving brows were bent upon the unappalled yeoman, who, having given vent to his displeasure, stalked sturdily down stairs with the rest of the company, totally disregarding the censures of those whom his remarks had scandalized.

And then the funeral pomp set forth; saulies with their batons, and gumphions of tarnished white crape, in honour of the well-preserved maiden fame of Mrs. Margaret Bertram. Six starved horses, themselves the very emblems of mortality, well cloaked and plumed, lugging along the hearse with its dismal emblazonry, crept in slow state towards the place of interment, preceded by Jamie Duff, an idiot, who, with weepers and cravat made of white paper, attended on every funeral, and followed by six mourning coaches, filled with the company.—Many of these now gave more free loose to their tongues, and discussed with unrestrained earnestness the amount of the succession, and the probability of its destination. The principal expectants, however, kept a prudent silence, indeed ashamed to express hopes which might prove fallacious; and the agent, or man of business, who alone knew exactly how matters stood, maintained a countenance of mysterious importance, as if determined to preserve the full interest of anxiety and suspense.

At length they arrived at the churchyard gates, and from

thence, amid the gaping of two or three dozen of idle women with infants in their arms, and accompanied by some twenty children, who ran gambolling and screaming alongside of the sable procession, they finally arrived at the burial-place of the Singleside family. This was a square enclosure in the Greyfriars' churchyard, guarded on one side by a veteran angel, without a nose, and having only one wing, who had the merit of having maintained his post for a century, while his comrade cherub, who had stood sentinel on the corresponding pedestal, lay a broken trunk among the hemlock, burdock, and nettles, which grew in gigantic luxuriance around the walls of the mausoleum. A moss-grown and broken inscription informed the reader, that in the year 1650 Captain Andrew Bertram, first of Singleside, descended of the very ancient and honourable house of Ellangowan, had caused this monument to be erected for himself and his descendants. . . .

Here then, amid the deep black fat loam into which her ancestors were now resolved, they deposited the body of Mrs. Margaret Bertram; and, like soldiers returning from a military funeral, the nearest relations who might be interested in the settlements of the lady, urged the dog-cattle of the hackney coaches to all the speed of which they were capable, in order to put an end to farther suspense on that interesting topic.—*Guy Mannering*.

##### 5. The Fisherman's Funeral.

THE Antiquary, being now alone, hastened his pace, which had been retarded by these various discussions, and the rencontre which had closed them, and soon arrived before the half-dozen cottages at Mussel-crag. They had now, in addition to their usual squalid and uncomfortable appearance, the melancholy attributes of the house of mourning. The

boats were all drawn up on the beach ; and, though the day was fine, and the season favourable, the chant, which is used by the fishers when at sea, was silent, as well as the prattle of the children, and the shrill song of the mother, as she sits mending her nets by the door. A few of the neighbours, some in their antique and well-saved suits of black, others in their ordinary clothes, but all bearing an expression of mournful sympathy with distress so sudden and unexpected, stood gathered around the door of Mucklebackit's cottage, waiting till 'the body was lifted.' As the Laird of Monkbarns approached, they made way for him to enter, doffing their hats and bonnets as he passed, with an air of melancholy courtesy, and he returned their salutes in the same manner.

In the inside of the cottage was a scene, which our Wilkie alone could have painted, with that exquisite feeling of nature that characterises his enchanting productions.

The body was laid in its coffin within the wooden bedstead which the young fisher had occupied while alive. At a little distance stood the father, whose rugged weather-beaten countenance, shaded by his grizzled hair, had faced many a stormy night and night-like day. He was apparently revolving his loss in his mind with that strong feeling of painful grief, peculiar to harsh and rough characters, which almost breaks forth into hatred against the world, and all that remain in it, after the beloved object is withdrawn. The old man had made the most desperate efforts to save his son, and had only been withheld by main force from renewing them at a moment, when, without the possibility of assisting the sufferer, he must himself have perished. All this apparently was boiling in his recollection. His glance was directed sidelong towards the coffin, as to an object on which he could not steadfastly look, and yet from which

he could not withdraw his eyes. His answers to the necessary questions which were occasionally put to him, were brief, harsh, and almost fierce. His family had not yet dared to address to him a word, either of sympathy or consolation. His masculine wife, virago as she was, and absolute mistress of the family, as she justly boasted herself, on all ordinary occasions, was, by this great loss, terrified into silence and submission, and compelled to hide from her husband's observation the bursts of her female sorrow. As he had rejected food ever since the disaster had happened, not daring herself to approach him, she had that morning, with affectionate artifice, employed the youngest and favourite child to present her husband with some nourishment. His first action was to put it from him with an angry violence, that frightened the child; his next, to snatch up the boy and devour him with kisses. 'Ye'll be a bra' fallow, an ye be spared, Patie,—but ye'll never—never can be—what he was to me!—He has sailed the coble wi' me since he was ten years auld, and there wasna the like o' him drew a net betwixt this and Buchanness.—They say folks maun su' mit—I will try.'

And he had been silent from that moment until compelled to answer the necessary questions we have already noticed. Such was the disconsolate state of the father.

In another corner of the cottage, her face covered by her apron, which was flung over it, sat the mother—the nature of her grief sufficiently indicated, by the wringing of her hands, and the convulsive agitation of the bosom which the covering could not conceal. Two of her gossips, officiously whispering into her ear the common-place topic of resignation under irremediable misfortune, seemed as if they were endeavouring to stun the grief which they could not console.

The sorrow of the children was mingled with wonder at

the preparations they beheld around them, and at the unusual display of wheaten bread and wine, which the poorest peasant, or fisher, offers to the guests on these mournful occasions; and thus their grief for their brother's death was almost already lost in admiration of the splendour of his funeral.

But the figure of the old grandmother was the most remarkable of the sorrowing group. Seated on her accustomed chair, with her usual air of apathy, and want of interest in what surrounded her, she seemed every now and then mechanically to resume the motion of twirling her spindle; then to look towards her bosom for the distaff, although both had been laid aside. She would then cast her eyes about as if surprised at missing the usual implements of her industry, and appear struck by the black colour of the gown in which they had dressed her, and embarrassed by the number of persons by whom she was surrounded. Then, finally, she would raise her head with a ghastly look, and fix her eyes upon the bed which contained the coffin of her grandson, as if she had at once, and for the first time, acquired sense to comprehend her inexpressible calamity. These alternate feelings of embarrassment, wonder, and grief, seemed to succeed each other more than once upon her torpid features. But she spoke not a word—neither had she shed a tear—nor did one of the family understand, either from look or expression, to what extent she comprehended the uncommon bustle around her. Thus she sat among the funeral assembly like a connecting link between the surviving mourners and the dead corpse which they bewailed—a being in whom the light of existence was already obscured by the encroaching shadows of death. . . .

To return from a digression which can only serve to introduce the honest clergyman more particularly to our

readers, Mr. Blattergowl had no sooner entered the hut, and received the mute and melancholy salutations of the company whom it contained, than he edged himself towards the unfortunate father, and seemed to endeavour to slide in a few words of condolence or of consolation. But the old man was incapable as yet of receiving either; he nodded, however, gruffly, and shook the clergyman's hand in acknowledgment of his good intentions, but was either unable or unwilling to make any verbal reply.

The minister next passed to the mother, moving along the floor as slowly, silently, and gradually, as if he had been afraid that the ground would, like unsafe ice, break beneath his feet, or that the first echo of a footstep was to dissolve some magic spell, and plunge the hut, with all its inmates, into a subterranean abyss. The tenor of what he had said to the poor woman could only be judged by her answers, as, half-stifled by sobs ill-repressed, and by the covering which she still kept over her countenance, she faintly answered at each pause in his speech—'Yes, sir, yes!—Ye're very gude—ye're very gude!—Nae doubt, nae doubt!—It's our duty to submit!—But, O dear! my poor Steenie! the pride o' my very heart, that was sae handsome and comely, and a help to his family, and a comfort to us a', and a pleasure to a' that lookit on him!—O my bairn! my bairn! my bairn! what for is thou lying there!—and eh! what for am I left to greet for ye!'

There was no contending with this burst of sorrow and natural affection. Oldbuck had repeated recourse to his snuff-box to conceal the tears which, despite his shrewd and caustic temper, were apt to start on such occasions. The female assistants whimpered, the men held their bonnets to their faces, and spoke apart with each other. The clergyman, meantime, addressed his ghostly consolation to the aged



grandmother. At first she listened, or seemed to listen, to what he said, with the apathy of her usual unconsciousness. But as, in pressing this theme, he approached so near to her ear, that the sense of his words became distinctly intelligible to her, though unheard by those who stood more distant, her countenance at once assumed that stern and expressive cast which characterised her intervals of intelligence. She drew up her head and body, shook her head in a manner that showed at least impatience, if not scorn of his counsel, and waved her hand slightly, but with a gesture so expressive, as to indicate to all who witnessed it a marked and disdainful rejection of the ghostly consolation proffered to her. The minister stepped back as if repulsed, and, by lifting gently and dropping his hand, seemed to show at once wonder, sorrow, and compassion for her dreadful state of mind. The rest of the company sympathised, and a stifled whisper went through them, indicating how much her desperate and determined manner impressed them with awe and even horror. . . .

The coffin, covered with a pall, and supported upon handspikes by the nearest relatives, now only waited the father to support the head, as is customary. Two or three of these privileged persons spoke to him, but he only answered by shaking his hand and his head in token of refusal. With better intention than judgment, the friends, who considered this as an act of duty on the part of the living, and of decency towards the deceased, would have proceeded to enforce their request, had not Oldbuck interfered between the distressed father and his well-meaning tormentors, and informed them, that he himself, as landlord and master to the deceased, 'would carry his head to the grave.' In spite of the sorrowful occasion, the hearts of the relatives swelled within them at so marked a distinction on the part of the

laird; and old Alison Breck, who was present among other fish-women, swore almost aloud, 'His honour Monkbarns should never want sax warp of oysters in the season (of which fish he was understood to be fond), if she should gang to sea and dredge for them hersell, in the foulest wind that ever blew.' And such is the temper of the Scottish common people, that, by this instance of compliance with their customs, and respect for their persons, Mr. Oldbuck gained more popularity than by all the sums which he had yearly distributed in the parish for purposes of private or general charity.

The sad procession now moved slowly forward, preceded by the beadles, or saulies, with their batons,—miserable looking old men, tottering as if on the edge of that grave to which they were marshalling another, and clad, according to Scottish guise, with threadbare black coats, and hunting-caps, decorated with rusty crape. Monkbarns would probably have remonstrated against this superfluous expense, had he been consulted; but, in doing so, he would have given more offence than he gained popularity by condescending to perform the office of chief mourner. Of this he was quite aware, and wisely withheld rebuke, where rebuke and advice would have been equally unavailing. In truth, the Scottish peasantry are still infected with that rage for funeral ceremonial, which once distinguished the grandees of the kingdom so much, that a sumptuary law was made by the Parliament of Scotland for the purpose of restraining it; and I have known many in the lowest stations, who have denied themselves not merely the comforts, but almost the necessaries of life, in order to save such a sum of money as might enable their surviving friends to bury them like Christians, as they termed it; nor could their faithful executors be prevailed upon, though equally necessitous,

to turn to the use and maintenance of the living, the money vainly wasted upon the interment of the dead.

The procession to the churchyard, at about half-a-mile's distance, was made with the mournful solemnity usual on these occasions,—the body was consigned to its parent earth, —and when the labour of the grave-diggers had filled up the trench, and covered it with fresh sod, Mr. Oldbuck, taking his hat off, saluted the assistants, who had stood by in melancholy silence, and with that adieu dispersed the mourners. . . . .

The coffin had been borne from the place where it rested. The mourners, in regular gradation, according to their rank or their relationship to the deceased, had filed from the cottage, while the younger male children were led along to totter after the bier of their brother, and to view with wonder a ceremonial which they could hardly comprehend. The female gossips next rose to depart, and, with consideration for the situation of the parents, carried along with them the girls of the family, to give the unhappy pair time and opportunity to open their hearts to each other, and soften their grief by communicating it. But their kind intention was without effect. The last of them had darkened the entrance of the cottage, as she went out, and drawn the door softly behind her, when the father, first ascertaining by a hasty glance that no stranger remained, started up, clasped his hands wildly above his head, uttered a cry of the despair which he had hitherto repressed, and, in all the impotent impatience of grief, half rushed half staggered forward to the bed on which the coffin had been deposited, threw himself down upon it, and smothering, as it were, his head among the bed-clothes, gave vent to the full passion of his sorrow. It was in vain that the wretched mother, terrified by the vehemence of her husband's affliction—affliction still more

fearful as agitating a man of hardened manners and a robust frame—suppressed her own sobs and tears, and, pulling him by the skirts of his coat, implored him to rise and remember, that, though one was removed, he had still a wife and children to comfort and support. The appeal came at too early a period of his anguish, and was totally unattended to; he continued to remain prostrate, indicating, by sobs so bitter and violent that they shook the bed and partition against which it rested, by clenched hands which grasped the bed-clothes, and by the vehement and convulsive motion of his legs, how deep and how terrible was the agony of a father's sorrow.

‘O, what a day is this! what a day is this!’ said the poor mother, her womanish affliction already exhausted by sobs and tears, and now almost lost in terror for the state in which she beheld her husband—‘O, what an hour is this! and naebody to help a poor lone woman—O, gudemither, could ye but speak a word to him!—wad ye but bid him be comforted!’

To her astonishment, and even to the increase of her fear, her husband's mother heard an answer to the appeal. She rose and walked across the floor without support, and without much apparent feebleness, and standing by the bed on which her son had extended himself, she said, ‘Rise up, my son, and sorrow not for him that is beyond sin and sorrow and temptation. Sorrow is for those that remain in this vale of sorrow and darkness—I, wha dinna sorrow, and wha canna sorrow for ony ane, hae maist need that ye should a' sorrow for me.’

The voice of his mother, not heard for years as taking part in the active duties of life, or offering advice or consolation, produced its effect upon her son. He assumed a sitting posture on the side of the bed, and his appearance,

attitude, and gestures, changed from those of angry despair to deep grief and dejection. The grandmother retired to her nook, the mother mechanically took in her hand her tattered Bible, and seemed to read, though her eyes were drowned with tears.—*The Antiquary.*

#### 6. The Trial and Execution of Fergus Mac-Ivor.

EDWARD, attended by his former servant Alick Polwarth, who had re-entered his service at Edinburgh, reached Carlisle while the commission of Oyer and Terminer on his unfortunate associates was yet sitting. He had pushed forward in haste,—not, alas! with the most distant hope of saving Fergus, but to see him for the last time. I ought to have mentioned, that he had furnished funds for the defence of the prisoners in the most liberal manner, as soon as he heard that the day of trial was fixed. A solicitor, and the first counsel, accordingly attended; but it was upon the same footing on which the first physicians are usually summoned to the bedside of some dying man of rank;—the doctors to take the advantage of some incalculable chance of an exertion of nature—the lawyers to avail themselves of the barely possible occurrence of some legal flaw. Edward pressed into the court, which was extremely crowded; but by his arriving from the north, and his extreme eagerness and agitation, it was supposed he was a relation of the prisoners, and people made way for him. It was the third sitting of the court, and there were two men at the bar. The verdict of GUILTY was already pronounced. Edward just glanced at the bar during the momentous pause which ensued. There was no mistaking the stately form and noble features of Fergus Mac-Ivor, although his dress was squalid, and his countenance tinged

with the sickly yellow hue of long and close imprisonment. By his side was Evan Maccombich. Edward felt sick and dizzy as he gazed on them; but he was recalled to himself as the Clerk of Arraighs pronounced the solemn words: 'Fergus Mac-Ivor of Glennaquoich, otherwise called Vich Ian Vohr, and Evan Mac-Ivor, in the Dhu of Tarra-leugh, otherwise called Evan Dhu, otherwise called Evan Maccombich, or Evan Dhu Maccombich—you, and each of you, stand attainted of high treason. What have you to say for yourselves why the Court should not pronounce judgment against you, that you die according to law?'

Fergus, as the presiding Judge was putting on the fatal cap of judgment, placed his own bonnet upon his head, regarded him with a steadfast and stern look, and replied in a firm voice, 'I cannot let this numerous audience suppose that to such an appeal I have no answer to make. But what I have to say, you would not bear to hear, for my defence would be your condemnation. Proceed, then, in the name of God, to do what is permitted to you. Yesterday, and the day before, you have condemned loyal and honourable blood to be poured forth like water. Spare not mine. Were that of all my ancestors in my veins, I would have perilled it in this quarrel.' He resumed his seat, and refused again to rise.

Evan Maccombich looked at him with great earnestness, and, rising up, seemed anxious to speak; but the confusion of the court, and the perplexity arising from thinking in a language different from that in which he was to express himself, kept him silent. There was a murmur of compassion among the spectators, from the idea that the poor fellow intended to plead the influence of his superior as an excuse for his crime. The Judge commanded silence, and encouraged Evan to proceed.

‘I was only ganging to say, my Lord,’ said Evan, in what he meant to be an insinuating manner, ‘that if your excellent honour, and the honourable Court, would let Vich Ian Vohr go free just this once, and let him gae back to France, and no to trouble King George’s government again, that ony six o’ the very best of his clan will be willing to be justified in his stead; and if you’ll just let me gae down to Glennaquoich, I’ll fetch them up to ye myself, to head or hang, and you may begin wi’ me the very first man.’

Notwithstanding the solemnity of the occasion, a sort of laugh was heard in the court at the extraordinary nature of the proposal. The Judge checked this indecency, and Evan, looking sternly around, when the murmur abated, ‘If the Saxon gentlemen are laughing,’ he said, ‘because a poor man, such as me, thinks my life, or the life of six of my degree, is worth that of Vich Ian Vohr, it’s like enough they may be very right: but if they laugh because they think I would not keep my word, and come back to redeem him, I can tell them they ken neither the heart of a Hielandman, nor the honour of a gentleman.’

There was no further inclination to laugh among the audience, and a dead silence ensued.

The Judge then pronounced upon both prisoners the sentence of the law of high treason, with all its horrible accompaniments. The execution was appointed for the ensuing day. ‘For you, Fergus Mac-Ivor,’ continued the Judge, ‘I can hold out no hope of mercy. You must prepare against to-morrow for your last sufferings here, and your great audit hereafter.’

‘I desire nothing else, my lord,’ answered Fergus, in the same manly and firm tone.

The hard eyes of Evan, which had been perpetually bent on his Chief, were moistened with a tear. ‘For you, poor

ignorant man,' continued the Judge, 'who, following the ideas in which you have been educated, have this day given us a striking example how the loyalty due to the king and state alone, is, from your unhappy ideas of clan-ship, transferred to some ambitious individual, who ends by making you the tool of his crimes—for you, I say, I feel so much compassion, that if you can make up your mind to petition for grace, I will endeavour to procure it for you. Otherwise'——

'Grace me no grace,' said Evan; 'since you are to shed Vich Ian Vohr's blood, the only favour I would accept from you, is—to bid them loose my hands and gie me my claymore, and bide you just a minute sitting where you are!'

'Remove the prisoners,' said the Judge; 'his blood be upon his own head.' . . .

The place of Fergus's confinement was a gloomy and vaulted apartment in the central part of the Castle—a huge old tower, supposed to be of great antiquity, and surrounded by outworks, seemingly of Henry VIII.'s time, or somewhat later. The grating of the large old-fashioned bars and bolts, withdrawn for the purpose of admitting Edward, was answered by the clash of chains, as the unfortunate Chieftain, strongly and heavily fettered, shuffled along the stone floor of his prison, to fling himself into his friend's arms. . . .

Soon after, a file of soldiers entered with a blacksmith, who struck the fetters from the legs of the prisoners.

'You see the compliment they pay to our Highland strength and courage—we have lain chained here like wild beasts, till our legs are cramped into palsy, and when they free us, they send six soldiers with loaded muskets to prevent our taking the castle by storm!'

Edward afterwards learned that these severe precautions had been taken in consequence of a desperate attempt of



the prisoners to escape, in which they had very nearly succeeded.

Shortly afterwards the drums of the garrison beat to arms. 'This is the last turn-out,' said Fergus, 'that I shall hear and obey.' . . .

'We part not *here!*' said Waverley.

'O yes, we do; you must come no farther. Not that I fear what is to follow for myself,' he said proudly: 'Nature has her tortures as well as art; and how happy should we think the man who escapes from the throes of a mortal and painful disorder, in the space of a short half hour? And this matter, spin it out as they will, cannot last longer. But what a dying man can suffer firmly, may kill a living friend to look upon.—This same law of high treason,' he continued, with astonishing firmness and composure, 'is one of the blessings, Edward, with which your free country has accommodated poor old Scotland: her own jurisprudence, as I have heard, was much milder. But I suppose one day or other—when there are no longer any wild Highlanders to benefit by its tender mercies—they will blot it from their records, as levelling them with a nation of cannibals. The mummery, too, of exposing the senseless head—they have not the wit to grace mine with a paper coronet; there would be some satire in that, Edward. I hope they will set it on the Scotch gate though, that I may look, even after death, to the blue hills of my own country, which I love so dearly.' . . .

An officer now appeared, and intimated that the High Sheriff and his attendants waited before the gate of the Castle, to claim the bodies of Fergus Mac-Ivor and Evan Maccombich. 'I come,' said Fergus. Accordingly, supporting Edward by the arm, and followed by Evan Dhu and the priest, he moved down the stairs of the tower,

the soldiers bringing up the rear. The court was occupied by a squadron of dragoons and a battalion of infantry, drawn up in hollow square. Within their ranks was the sledge, or hurdle, on which the prisoners were to be drawn to the place of execution, about a mile distant from Carlisle. It was painted black, and drawn by a white horse. At one end of the vehicle sat the Executioner, a horrid-looking fellow, as be seemed his trade, with the broad axe in his hand; at the other end, next the horse, was an empty seat for two persons. 'Through the deep and dark Gothic archway, that opened on the drawbridge, were seen on horseback the High Sheriff and his attendants, whom the etiquette betwixt the civil and military powers did not permit to come farther. 'This is well got up for a closing scene,' said Fergus, smiling disdainfully as he gazed around upon the apparatus of terror. Evan Dhu exclaimed with some eagerness, after looking at the dragoons, 'These are the very chields that galloped off at Gladsmuir, before we could kill a dozen o' them. They look bold enough now, however.' The priest entreated him to be silent.

The sledge now approached, and Fergus, turning round, embraced Waverley, kissed him on each side of the face, and stepped nimbly into his place. Evan sat down by his side. The priest was to follow in a carriage belonging to his patron, the Catholic gentleman at whose house Flora resided. As Fergus waved his hand to Edward, the ranks closed around the sledge, and the whole procession began to move forward. There was a momentary stop at the gate-way, while the governor of the Castle and the High Sheriff went through a short ceremony, the military officer there delivering over the persons of the criminals to the civil power. 'God save King George!' said the High Sheriff. When the formality concluded, Fergus stood erect

in the sledge, and, with a firm and steady voice, replied, 'God save King *James!*' These were the last words which Waverley heard him speak.

The procession resumed its march, and the sledge vanished from beneath the portal, under which it had stopped for an instant. The dead-march was then heard, and its melancholy sounds were mingled with those of a muffled peal, tolled from the neighbouring cathedral. The sound of the military music died away as the procession moved on—the sullen clang of the bells was soon heard to sound alone.—*Waverley*.

#### 7. Reflections on his own Life.

Abbotsford, 1821.

IN truth, I have long given up poetry. I have had my day with the public; and being no great believer in poetical immortality, I was very well pleased to rise a winner, without continuing the game, till I was beggared of any credit I had acquired. Besides, I felt the prudence of giving way before the more forcible and powerful genius of Byron. If I were either greedy, or jealous of poetical fame—and both are strangers to my nature—I might comfort myself with the thought, that I would hesitate to strip myself to the contest so fearlessly as Byron does; or to command the wonder and terror of the public, by exhibiting, in my own person, the sublime attitude of the dying gladiator. But with the old frankness of twenty years since, I will fairly own, that this same delicacy of mine may arise more from conscious want of vigour and inferiority, than from a delicate dislike to the nature of the conflict. At any rate, there is a time for every thing, and without swearing oaths to it, I think my time for poetry has gone by. . . .

When I look around me, and consider how many

changes you will see in feature, form, and fashion, amongst all you knew and loved ; and how much, no sudden squall, or violent tempest, but the slow and gradual progress of life's long voyage, has severed all the gallant fellowships whom you left spreading their sails to the morning breeze, I really am not sure that you would have much pleasure.

The gay and wild romance of life is over with all of us. The real, dull, and stern history of humanity has made a far greater progress over our heads ; and age, dark and unlovely, has laid his crutch over the stoutest fellow's shoulders. One thing your old society may boast, that they have all run their course with honour, and almost all with distinction ; and the brother suppers of Frederick Street have certainly made a very considerable figure in the world, as was to be expected, from her talents under whose auspices they were assembled.

One of the most pleasant sights which you would see in Scotland, as it now stands, would be your brother George in possession of the most beautiful and romantic place in Clydesdale—Corehouse. I have promised often to go out with him, and assist him with my deep experience as a planter and landscape gardener. I promise you my oaks will outlast my laurels ; and I pique myself more upon my compositions for manure than on any other compositions whatsoever to which I was ever accessory. But so much does business of one sort or other engage us both, that we never have been able to fix a time which suited us both ; and with the utmost wish to make out the party, perhaps we never may.

This is a melancholy letter, but it is chiefly so from the sad tone of yours—who have had such real disasters to lament—while mine is only the humorous sadness, which a retrospect on human life is sure to produce in the most prosperous. For my own course of life, I have only to be ashamed of its prosperity, and afraid of its termination ; for I have little

reason, arguing on the doctrine of chances, to hope that the same good fortune will attend me for ever. I have had an affectionate and promising family, many friends, few un-friends, and I think, no enemies—and more of fame and fortune than mere literature ever procured for a man before.

I dwell among my own people, and have many whose happiness is dependent on me, and which I study to the best of my power. I trust my temper, which you know is by nature good and easy, has not been spoiled by flattery or prosperity; and therefore I have escaped entirely that irritability of disposition which I think is planted, like the slave, in the poet's chariot, to prevent his enjoying his triumph.

Should things, therefore, change with me—and in these times, or indeed in any times, such change is to be apprehended—I trust I shall be able to surrender these adventitious advantages, as I would my upper dress, as something extremely comfortable, but which I can make shift to do without.

Edinburgh, 1825.

For myself, if things go badly in London, the magic wand of the Unknown will be shivered in his grasp. He must then, faith, be termed the Too-well-known. The feast of fancy will be over with the feeling of independence. He shall no longer have the delight of waking in the morning with bright ideas in his mind, hasten to commit them to paper, and count them monthly, as the means of planting such scaurs, and purchasing such wastes; replacing dreams of fiction by other prospective visions of walks by

'Fountain heads, and pathless groves;  
Places which pale passion loves.'

This cannot be; but I may work substantial husbandry,

*i.e.* write history, and such concerns. They will not be received with the same enthusiasm; at least I much doubt, the general knowledge that an author must write for his bread, at least for improving his pittance, degrades him and his productions in the public eye. He falls into the second-rate rank of estimation :

‘While the harness sore galls, and the spurs his side goad,  
The high-mettled racer’s a hack on the road.’

It is a bitter thought; but if tears start at it, let them flow. My heart clings to the place I have created. There is scarce a tree on it that does not owe its being to me.

What a life mine has been!—half educated, almost wholly neglected, or left to myself; stuffing my head with most nonsensical trash, and undervalued by most of my companions for a time; getting forward, and held a bold and clever fellow, contrary to the opinion of all who thought me a mere dreamer: broken-hearted for two years; my heart handsomely pieced again; but the crack will remain till my dying day. Rich and poor four or five times; once on the verge of ruin, yet opened a new source of wealth almost overflowing. Now to be broken in my pitch of pride, and nearly winged (unless good news should come), because London chooses to be in an uproar, and in the tumult of bulls and bears, a poor inoffensive lion like myself is pushed to the wall. But what is to be the end of it? God knows; and so ends the catechism.

Nobody in the end can lose a penny by me—that is one comfort. Men will think pride has had a fall. Let them indulge their own pride in thinking that my fall will make them higher, or seem so at least. I have the satisfaction to recollect that my prosperity has been of advantage to many, and to hope that some at least will forgive my transient

wealth on account of the innocence of my intentions, and my real wish to do good to the poor. Sad hearts, too, at Darnick, and in the cottages of Abbotsford. I have half resolved never to see the place again. How could I tread my hall with such a diminished crest? How live a poor indebted man, where I was once the wealthy—the honoured? I was to have gone there on Saturday in joy and prosperity to receive my friends. My dogs will wait for me in vain. It is foolish—but the thoughts of parting from these dumb creatures have moved me more than any of the painful reflections I have put down. Poor things, I must get them kind masters! There may be yet those who, loving me, may love my dog, because it has been mine. I must end these gloomy forebodings, or I shall lose the tone of mind with which men should meet distress. I feel my dogs' feet on my knees. I hear them whining and seeking me every where. This is nonsense, but it is what they would do could they know how things may be. An odd thought strikes me—When I die, will the journal of these days be taken out of the ebony cabinet at Abbotsford, and read with wonder, that the well-seeming Baronet should ever have experienced the risk of such a hitch? Or will it be found in some obscure lodging-house, where the decayed son of Chivalry had hung up his scutcheon, and where one or two old friends will look grave, and whisper to each other, 'Poor gentleman'—'a well-meaning man'—'nobody's enemy but his own'—'thought his parts would never wear out'—'family poorly left'—'pity he took that foolish title.' Who can answer this question?

Poor Will Laidlaw—Poor Tom Purdie—such news will wring your hearts, and many a poor fellow besides to whom my prosperity was daily bread.—*Lockhart's Memoirs of the Life of Sir Walter Scott.*

## LI.

### SYDNEY SMITH.

1771—1845.

SYDNEY SMITH was born at Woodford, near London, in the year 1771. He was educated at Winchester School and at New College, where he obtained a Fellowship in 1790. He took orders, and settled in his first curacy in a remote village on Salisbury Plain.

At the end of two years he resigned this charge, in order to accompany the son of the squire of the parish to Weimar, where he was to reside for his education. The war of 1797 defeated this purpose, and tutor and scholar were driven to Edinburgh, where Sydney Smith remained for five years as minister of the Episcopal Church in that city. He became the intimate friend of Jeffrey, Murray, and Brougham, and in company with them commenced the *Edinburgh Review*, of which he was the first editor as well as one of the founders. On his removal to London he continued to be one of its principal contributors, advocating in its pages the cause of progress in political matters, as well as in the many questions now best known under the name of social science. In London he became both a popular preacher and also a successful lecturer at the Royal Institution. During the greater part of his life he was the friend of Lord Grey, Lord Holland, and the other leaders of the Whig party. He was made a Canon of Bristol in 1828, and of St. Paul's in 1831. He died in 1845.

His principal writings are:—(1) *Peter Plymley's Letters on the subject of the Catholics*, 'to my brother Abraham who lives in the country,' in which he pleads the cause of Catholic emancipation, and attacks Mr. Perceval and the Ministers



of the day; these first appeared in the year 1807. (2) His Letters to Archdeacon Singleton, written after he was a Canon, in defence of Cathedral Establishments. In the first of them there occurs the facetious description of the Meeting at Dort. (3) An unfinished Fragment on the Irish Church. (4) A Pamphlet on the Ballot. (5) Lectures on Moral Philosophy, delivered at the Royal Institution. (6) Numerous contributions to the *Edinburgh Review*. There is an excellent memoir of him, written by his daughter, Lady Holland.

Sydney Smith was one of the most free and independent and genial of human beings. There was no man who fought for more good causes, or whose voice was oftener lifted up in the interests of humanity and justice. In estimating this part of his character, we must not forget his own remark, that 'the first thirty years of this century were a dreary time for Liberal clergymen.' His wit was the vehicle of strong sense, applied generally to the best of purposes; his conversation was at least equal to his writings. If not to be ranked with Swift and Sterne, he may still claim a high place in the list of English Humourists.

# 1. Bentham's Book of Fallacies summed up in Noodle's Oration.

WHAT would our ancestors say to this, Sir? How does this measure tally with their institutions? How does it agree with their experience? Are we to put the wisdom of yesterday in competition with the wisdom of centuries? (*Hear, hear!*) Is beardless youth to show no respect for the decisions of mature age? (*Loud cries of Hear! hear!*) If this measure is right, would it have escaped the wisdom of those Saxon progenitors to whom we are indebted for so many of our best political institutions? Would the Dane have passed it over? Would the Norman have rejected it?

Would such a notable discovery have been reserved for these modern and degenerate times? Besides, Sir, if the measure itself is good, I ask the honourable gentleman if this is the time for carrying it into execution—whether, in fact, a more unfortunate period could have been selected than that which he has chosen? If this were an ordinary measure, I should not oppose it with so much vehemence; but, Sir, it calls in question the wisdom of an irrevocable law—of a law passed at the memorable period of the Revolution. What right have we, Sir, to break down this firm column, on which the great men of that day stamped a character of eternity? Are not all authorities against this measure—Pitt, Fox, Cicero, and the Attorney and Solicitor General? The proposition is new, Sir; it is the first time it was ever heard in this House. I am not prepared, Sir—this House is not prepared, to receive it. The measure implies a distrust of his Majesty's government; their disapproval is sufficient to warrant opposition. Precaution only is requisite where danger is apprehended. Here the high character of the individuals in question is a sufficient guarantee against any ground of alarm. Give not, then, your sanction to this measure; for, whatever be its character, if you do give your sanction to it, the same man by whom this is proposed, will propose to you others to which it will be impossible to give your consent. I care very little, Sir, for the ostensible measure; but what is there behind? What are the honourable gentleman's future schemes? If we pass this bill, what fresh concessions may he not require? What further degradation is he planning for his country? Talk of evil and inconvenience, Sir! look to other countries—study other aggregations and societies of men, and then see whether the laws of this country demand a remedy, or deserve a panegyric. Was the honourable gentleman (let me ask him) always of this way of thinking?

Do I not remember when he was the advocat  in this House of very opposite opinions? I not only quarrel with his present sentiments, Sir, but I declare very frankly I do not like the party with which he acts. If his own motives were as pure as possible, they cannot but suffer contamination from those with whom he is politically associated. This measure may be a boon to the constitution, but I will accept no favour to the constitution from such hands. (*Loud cries of Hear! hear!*) I profess myself, Sir, an honest and upright member of the British Parliament, and I am not afraid to profess myself an enemy to all change, and all innovation. I am satisfied with things as they are; and it will be my pride and pleasure to hand down this country to my children as I received it from those who preceded me. The honourable gentleman pretends to justify the severity with which he has attacked the Noble Lord who presides in the Court of Chancery. But I say such attacks are pregnant with mischief to Government itself. Oppose Ministers, you oppose Government: disgrace Ministers, you disgrace Government: bring Ministers into contempt, you bring Government into contempt; and anarchy and civil war are the consequences. Besides, Sir, the measure is unnecessary. Nobody complains of disorder in that shape in which it is the aim of your measure to propose a remedy to it. The business is one of the greatest importance; there is need of the greatest caution and circumspection. Do not let us be precipitate, Sir; it is impossible to foresee all consequences. Every thing should be gradual; the example of a neighbouring nation should fill us with alarm! The honourable gentleman has taxed me with illiberality, Sir. I deny the charge. I hate innovation, but I love improvement. I am an enemy to the corruption of Government, but I defend its influence. I dread reform, but I dread it only when it is

intemperate. I consider the liberty of the press as the great Palladium of the Constitution ; but, at the same time, I hold the licentiousness of the press in the greatest abhorrence. Nobody is more conscious than I am of the splendid abilities of the honourable mover, but I tell him at once, his scheme is too good to be practicable. It savours of Utopia. It looks well in theory, but it won't do in practice. It will not do, I repeat, Sir, in practice ; and so the advocates of the measure will find, if, unfortunately, it should find its way through Parliament. (*Cheers.*) The source of that corruption to which the honourable member alludes, is in the minds of the people ; so rank and extensive is that corruption, that no political reform can have any effect in removing it. Instead of reforming others—instead of reforming the State, the Constitution, and every thing that is most excellent, let each man reform himself ! let him look at home, he will find there enough to do, without looking abroad, and aiming at what is out of his power. (*Loud cheers.*) And now, Sir, as it is frequently the custom in this House to end with a quotation, and as the gentleman who preceded me in the debate has anticipated me in my favourite quotation of the ‘ Strong pull and the long pull,’ I shall end with the memorable words of the assembled Barons—*Nolumus leges Angliæ mutari.*—*Edinburgh Review*, 1825.

## 2. A Meeting of the Clergy at Dordrecht.

(*A short narrative illustrating the manner in which the Deans and Chapters are supposed to have been treated by the Bishops in the Reform of the Cathedrals.*)

I MET the other day, in an old Dutch Chronicle, with a passage so apposite to this subject, that though it is somewhat too light for the occasion, I cannot abstain from quoting it. There was a great meeting of all the clergy

at Dordrecht, and the chronicler thus describes it, which I give in the language of the translation:—‘And there was great store of Bishops in the town, in their robes goodly to behold, and all the great men of the State were there, and folks poured in in boats on the Meuse, the Merve, the Rhine, and the Linge, coming from the Isle of Beverlandt and Isselmond, and from all quarters in the Bailiwick of Dort; Arminians and Gomarists, with the friends of John Barneveldt and of Hugh Grote. And before my Lords the Bishops, Simon of Gloucester, who was a Bishop in those parts, disputed with Vorstius, and Leoline the Monk, and many texts of Scripture were bandied to and fro; and when this was done, and many propositions made, and it waxed towards twelve of the clock, my Lords the Bishops prepared to set them down to a fair repast, in which was great store of good things, and among the rest a roasted peacock, having in lieu of a tail, the arms and banners of the Archbishop, which was a goodly sight to all who favoured the Church; and then the Archbishop would say a grace, as was seemly to do, he being a very holy man; but ere he had finished, a great mob of townspeople and folks from the country, who were gathered under the window, cried out “Bread! bread!” for there was a great famine, and wheat had risen to three times the ordinary price of the sleich; and when they had done crying “Bread! bread!” they called out “No Bishops!” and began to cast up stones at the windows. Whereat my Lords the Bishops were in a great fright, and cast their dinner out of the window to appease the mob, and so the men of that town were well pleased, and did devour the meats with a great appetite; and then you might have seen my Lords standing with empty plates, and looking wistfully at each other, till Simon of Gloucester, he who

disputed with Leoline the Monk, stood up among them and said, "Good my Lords, is it your pleasure to stand here fasting, and that those who count lower in the Church than you do should feast and fluster? Let us order to us the dinner of the Deans and Canons, which is making ready for them in the chamber below." And this speech of Simon of Gloucester pleased the Bishops much; and so they sent for the host, one William of Ypres, and told him it was for the public good, and he, much fearing the Bishop, brought them the dinner of the Deans and Canons; and so the Deans and Canons went away without dinner, and were pelted by the men of the town, because they had not put any meat out of the window like the Bishops; and when the Count came to hear of it, he said it was a pleasant conceit, and that the Bishops were right cunning men, and had ding'd the Canons well.—*Letters to Archdeacon Singleton.*

### 3. Mr. Perceval's Irish Policy.

I CANNOT describe the horror and disgust which I felt at hearing Mr. Perceval call upon the then ministry for measures of vigour in Ireland. If I lived at Hampstead upon stewed meats and claret;—if I walked to church every Sunday before eleven young gentlemen of my own begetting, with their faces washed, and their hair pleasingly combed;—if the Almighty had blessed me with every earthly comfort,—how awfully would I pause before I sent forth the flame and the sword over the cabins of the poor, brave, generous, open-hearted peasants of Ireland! How easy it is to shed human blood; how easy it is to persuade ourselves that it is our duty to do so, and that the decision has cost us a severe struggle;—how much in all ages have wounds and shrieks and tears been the cheap and vulgar resources of the rulers of mankind;—how difficult and

how noble it is to govern in kindness, and to found an empire upon the everlasting basis of justice and affection! But what do men call vigour? To let loose hussars, and to bring up artillery; to govern with lighted matches, and to cut, and push, and prime—I call this, not vigour, but the sloth of cruelty and ignorance. The vigour I love, consists in finding out wherein subjects are aggrieved, in relieving them, in studying the temper and genius of a people, in consulting their prejudices, in selecting proper persons to lead and manage them, in the laborious, watchful, and difficult task of increasing public happiness by allaying each particular discontent. In this way Hoche pacified La Vendée, and in this way only will Ireland ever be subdued. But this, in the eyes of Mr. Perceval, is imbecility and meanness: houses are not broke open—women are not insulted—the people seem all to be happy; they are not rode over by horses, and cut by whips. Do you call this vigour?—Is this government?—*Peter Plymley's Letters.*

#### 4. The Dangers of Railroad Travelling, 1842.

THERE are two sorts of dangers which hang over railroads. The one retail dangers, where individuals only are concerned; the other, wholesale dangers, where the whole train, or a considerable part of it, is put in jeopardy. For the first danger there is a remedy in the prudence of individuals; for the second, there is none. No man need be drunk, nor need he jump out when the carriage is in motion; but in the present state of science it is impossible to guard effectually against the fracture of the axletree, or the explosion of the engine; and if the safety of the one party cannot be consulted but by the danger of the other, if the foolish cannot be restrained but by the unjust incarceration of the wise,

the prior consideration is due to those who have not the remedy for the evil in their own hands.

But the truth is—and so (after a hundred monopolising experiments on public patience) the railroad directors will find it—there can be no other dependence for the safety of the public than the care which every human being is inclined to take of his own life and limbs. Every thing beyond this is the mere lazy tyranny of monopoly, which makes no distinction between human beings and brown paper parcels. If riding were a monopoly, as travelling in carriages is now become, there are many gentlemen whom I see riding in the Park upon such false principles, that I am sure the cantering and galloping directors would strap them, in the ardour of their affection, to the saddle, padlock them to the stirrups, or compel them to ride behind a policeman of the stable; and nothing but a motion from O'Brien, or an order from Gladstone, could release them.

Let the company stick up all sorts of cautions and notices within their carriages and without; but, after that, no doors locked. If one door is allowed to be locked, the other will soon be so too; there is no other security to the public than absolute prohibition of the practice. The directors and agents of the Great Western are individually excellent men; but the moment men meet in public boards, they cease to be collectively excellent. The fund of morality becomes less, as the individual contributors increase in number. I do not accuse such respectable men of any wilful violation of truth, but the memoirs which they are about to present will be, without the scrupulous cross-examination of a committee of the House of Commons, mere waste paper.

But the most absurd of all legislative enactments is this hemiplegian law—an act of Parliament to protect one side of the body and not the other. If the wheel comes off on



the right, the open door is uppermost, and every one is saved. If, from any sudden avalanche on the road, the carriage is prostrated to the left, the locked door is uppermost, all escape is impossible, and the railroad martyrdom begins. •

Leave me to escape in the best way I can, as the fire-offices very kindly permit me to do. I know very well the danger of getting out on the off-side; but escape is the affair of a moment; suppose a train to have passed at that moment, I know I am safe from any other trains for twenty minutes or half an hour; and if I do get out on the off-side, I do not remain in the valley of death between the two trains, but am over to the opposite bank in an instant—only half-roasted, or merely browned, certainly not done enough for the Great Western directors. . . .

Railroad travelling is a delightful improvement of human life. Man is become a bird; he can fly longer and quicker than a Solan goose. The mamma rushes sixty miles in two hours to the aching finger of her conjugating and declining grammar boy. The early Scotchman scratches himself in the morning mists of the North, and has his porridge in Piccadilly before the setting sun. The Puseyite priest, after a rush of 100 miles, appears with his little volume of nonsense at the breakfast of his bookseller. Every thing is near, every thing is immediate—time, distance, and delay are abolished. But, though charming and fascinating as all this is, we must not shut our eyes to the price we shall pay for it. There will be every three or four years some dreadful massacre—whole trains will be hurled down a precipice, and 200 or 300 persons will be killed on the spot. There will be every now and then a great combustion of human bodies, as there has been at Paris; then all the newspapers up in arms—a thousand regulations, forgotten as soon as the

directors dare—loud screams of the velocity whistle—monopoly locks and bolts, as before.

The locking plea of directors is philanthropy; and I admit that to guard men from the commission of moral evil is as philanthropical as to prevent physical suffering. There is, I allow, a strong propensity in mankind to travel on railroads without paying; and to lock mankind in till they have completed their share of the contract is benevolent, because it guards the species from degrading and immoral conduct: but to burn or crush a whole train merely to prevent a few immoral insiders from not paying, is I hope a little more than Ripon or Gladstone will bear.

We have been, up to this point, very careless of our railway regulations. The first person of rank who is killed will put every thing in order, and produce a code of the most careful rules. I hope it will not be one of the bench of bishops; but should it be so destined, let the burnt bishop—the unwilling Titimer—remember that, however painful gradual concoction by fire may be, his death will produce unspeakable benefit to the public. Even Sodor and Man will be better than nothing. From that moment the bad effects of the monopoly are destroyed; no more fatal deference to the directors; no despotic incarceration, no barbarous inattention to the anatomy and physiology of the human body; no commitment to locomotive prisons with warrant. We shall then find it possible

‘Voyager libre sans mourir.’

*Letter to the Morning Chronicle.*

### 5. Treatment of Untried Prisoners.

PRISON discipline is an object of considerable importance ; but the common rights of mankind, and the common principles of justice, and humanity, and liberty, are of greater consequence even than prison discipline. Right and wrong, innocence and guilt, must not be confounded, that a prison-fancying Justice may bring his friend into the prison and say, 'Look what a spectacle of order, silence, and decorum we have established here! no idleness, all grinding!—we produce a penny roll every second,—our prison is supposed to be the best regulated prison in England. . . .

There seems to be in the minds of some gentlemen a notion, that when once a person is in prison, it is of little consequence how he is treated afterwards. The tyranny which prevailed, of putting a person in a particular dress before trial, now abolished by act of Parliament, was justified by this train of reasoning:—The man has been rendered infamous by imprisonment. He cannot be rendered more so, dress him as you will. His character is not rendered worse by the tread-mill than it is by being sent to the place where the tread-mill is at work. The substance of this way of thinking is, that when a fellow creature is in the frying-pan, there is no harm in pushing him into the fire ; that a little more misery—a little more infamy—a few more links, are of no sort of consequence in a prison-life. If this monstrous style of reasoning extended to hospitals as well as prisons, there would be no harm in breaking the small bone of a man's leg, because the large one was fractured, or in peppering with small shot a person who was wounded with a cannon-ball. The principle is, because a man is very wretched, there is no harm in making him a little more so.

The steady answer to all this is, that a man is imprisoned before trial, *solely* for the purpose of securing his appearance at his trial; and that no punishment nor privation, not clearly and candidly necessary for that purpose, should be inflicted upon him. I keep you in prison, because criminal justice would be defeated by your flight if I did not; but criminal justice can go on very well without degrading you to hard and infamous labour, or denying you any reasonable gratification. For these reasons, the first of those acts is just, the rest are mere tyranny. . . .

A prisoner before trial who can support himself, ought to be allowed every fair and rational enjoyment which he can purchase, not incompatible with prison discipline. He should be allowed to buy ale or wine in moderation,—to use tobacco, or any thing else he can pay for, within the above-mentioned limits. If he cannot support himself, and declines work, then he should be supported upon a very plain, but still a plentiful diet (something better, we think, than bread and water); and all prisoners before trial should be *allowed* to work. By a liberal share of earnings (or rather by rewards, for there would be no earnings), and also by an improved diet, and in the hands of humane magistrates, there would soon appear to be no necessity for appealing to the tread-mill till trial was over.—*Edinburgh Review*, 1824.

## 6. Francis Horner.

I REMEMBER the death of many eminent Englishmen, but I can safely say, I never remember an impression so general as that excited by the death of Francis Horner. The public looked upon him as a powerful and a safe man, who was labouring not for himself or his party, but for them. They were convinced of his talents, they confided in his

moderation, and they were sure of his motives ; he had improved so quickly, and so much, that his early death was looked on as the destruction of a great statesman, who had done but a small part of the good which might be expected from him, who would infallibly have risen to the highest offices, and as infallibly have filled them to the public good. Then as he had never lost a friend, and made so few enemies, there was no friction, no drawback ; public feeling had its free course ; the image of a good and great man was broadly before the world, unsullied by any breath of hatred ; there was nothing but pure sorrow ! Youth destroyed before its time, great talents and wisdom hurried to the grave, a kind and good man, who might have lived for the glory of England, torn from us in the flower of his life ! —but all this is gone and past, and, as Galileo said of his lost sight, ‘It has pleased God it should be so, and it must please me also.’—*Letter to Leonard Horner, Esq.*

### 7. The Profession of the Law.

ENDURE any thing rather than the loss of character ; cling to character as your best possession ; do not envy men who pass you in life, only because they are under less moral and religious restraint than yourself. Your object is not fame, but honourable fame : your object is not wealth, but wealth worthily obtained : your object is not power, but power gained fairly, and exercised virtuously. Long-suffering is a great and important lesson in human life ; in no part of human life is it more necessary than in your arduous profession. The greatest men it has produced have been at some period of their professional lives ready to faint at the long, and apparently fruitless, journey ; and if you look at those lives, you will find they have been supported by a confidence

(under God) in the general effects of character and industry. They have withstood the allurements of pleasure, which is the first and most common cause of failure; they have disdained the little arts and meannesses which carry base men a certain way, and no further; they have sternly rejected also the sudden means of growing basely rich, and dishonourably great, with which every man is at one time or another sure to be assailed; and then they have broken out into light and glory at the last, exhibiting to mankind the splendid spectacle of great talents long exercised by difficulties, and high principles never tainted with guilt.

After all, remember that your profession is a lottery in which you may lose as well as win; and you must take it as a lottery, in which, after every effort of your own, it is impossible to command success: for this you are not accountable; but you are accountable for your purity; you are accountable for the preservation of your character. It is not in every man's power to say, I will be a great and successful lawyer; but it is in every man's power to say, that he will (with God's assistance) be a good Christian and an honest man. Whatever is moral and religious is in your own power. If fortune deserts you, do not desert yourself; do not undervalue inward consolation; connect God with your labour; remember you are Christ's servant; be seeking always for the inheritance of immortal life. . . .

It is impossible in the profession of the law but that many opportunities must occur for the exertions of charity and benevolence. I do not mean the charity of money, but the charity of time, labour and attention; the protection of those whose resources are feeble, and the information of those whose knowledge is small. In the hands of bad men, the law is sometimes an artifice to mislead, and sometimes an engine to oppress. In your hands it may be, from time to time, a

buckler to shield, and a sanctuary to save: you may lift up oppressed humility, listen patiently to the injuries of the wretched, vindicate their just claims, maintain their fair rights, and show, that in the hurry of business, and the struggles of ambition, you have not forgotten the duties of a Christian—and the feelings of a man. It is in your power, above all other Christians, to combine the wisdom of the serpent with the innocence of the dove, and to fulfil, with greater energy and greater acuteness, and more perfect effect, than other men can pretend to, the love, the lessons, and the law of Christ.

I should caution the younger part of this profession (who are commonly selected for it on account of their superior talents), to cultivate a little more diffidence of their own powers, and a little less contempt for received opinions, than is commonly exhibited at the beginning of their career: mistrust of this nature teaches moderation in the formation of opinions, and prevents the painful necessity of inconsistency and recantation in future life. It is not possible that the ablest young men at the beginning of their intellectual existence can anticipate all those reasons, and dive into all those motives which induce mankind to act as they do act, and make the world such as we find it to be; and though there is doubtless much to alter, and much to improve in human affairs, yet you will find mankind not quite so wrong as, in the first ardour of youth, you supposed them to be; and you will find, as you advance in life, many new lights to open upon you, which nothing but advancing in life could ever enable you to observe. I say this, not to check originality and vigour of mind, which are the best chattels and possessions of the world; but to check that eagerness which arrives at conclusions without sufficient premises; to prevent that violence which is not uncommonly atoned for in after-

life, by the sacrifice of all principle and all opinions; to lessen that contempt which prevents a young man from improving his own understanding, by making a proper and prudent use of the understandings of his fellow creatures.

There is another unchristian fault which must be guarded against in the profession of the law, and that is, misanthropy—an exaggerated opinion of the faults and follies of mankind. It is naturally the worst part of mankind who are seen in courts of justice, and with whom the professors of the law are most conversant. The perpetual recurrence of crime and guilt insensibly connects itself with the recollections of the human race: mankind are always painted in the attitude of suffering and inflicting. It seems as if men were bound together by the relations of fraud and crime; but laws are not made for the quiet, the good, and the just: you see and know little of them in your profession, and, therefore, you forget them: you see the oppressor, and you let loose your eloquence against him; but you do not see the man of silent charity, who is always seeking out objects of compassion: the faithful guardian does not come into a court of justice, nor the good wife, nor the just servant, nor the dutiful son: you punish the robbers who ill treated the wayfaring man, but you know nothing of the good Samaritan who bound up his wounds. The lawyer who tempted his Master had heard, perhaps, of the sins of the woman at the feast, without knowing that she had poured her store of precious ointment on the feet of Jesus.—*Assize Sermon—The Lawyer that tempted Christ.*



## LII.

### SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE.

1772—1834.

SAMUEL TAYLOR COLERIDGE was born at the Vicarage of Ottery St. Mary's, Devonshire, on the 21st of October, 1772. From the age of nine he was educated at Christ's Hospital, where he already gave signs of his many-sided genius, as well as of that constitutional weakness which almost overpowered it. In 1791 he entered Jesus College, Cambridge; but he had anticipated life, and his mind was too much occupied with poetry, and with that new world of speculative politics opened up to mankind by the French Revolution, to allow him to attend to the regular studies of the University, which he left in 1794 without taking a degree.

The next few years he spent mainly at Bristol, in various ineffectual attempts to obtain an income as an author, a political lecturer, a Unitarian preacher, or the editor of a newspaper. He formed a close friendship with Southey and Wordsworth, and was excited by intercourse with the latter to write his best poetry. But the interest of ethical and political speculation was beginning to overpower in him the poetical impulse, and this tendency was very much increased by his visit to Germany in 1798. He found the German Universities in the fresh enthusiasm of speculative thought which Kant had awakened, and partook in it; and, though he never ceased to be original and independent, henceforward it became more or less consciously

the work of his life to absorb German thought and reproduce it in English forms. And it was a task not unworthy of him, if he had been able to fulfil it. But he had been led to soothe rheumatic pains by the use of opium, and this habit so utterly sapped all his vital energies, that for the next fifteen years he produced no work worthy of his genius, with the exception of the essays contained in the *Friend*. From 1815 till his death, on July 25th, 1834, he resided with a physician at Highgate, and under the restraint to which he there submitted, he partially recovered, and wrote most of his works, critical, theological, and philosophical. *Aids to Reflection* appeared in 1825, and the *Constitution of Church and State* in 1830. Moreover, his great reputation made his residence a kind of centre of literary pilgrimage, and by his wonderful conversation he probably exercised a wider influence than by his books, which, while full of striking reflexions, are rather collections of notes and essays than complete treatises on any subject. After his death several volumes of his *Literary Remains* and *Table Talk* were published, gathering up the fragments which remained of his intellectual life.

His writings must be viewed as the broken remains of a genius which, for want of self-command, of health, of physical and moral energy, never produced a perfect result in any one direction, though giving promise of the highest kind in many. His thought is suggestive, stimulating rather than satisfying, and the greatest result of his life was the intellectual activity he awakened in England. He prepared the way for German literature and philosophy, and broke down the wall that kept England so long shut up from the influence of European culture. Even the imperfection of his works might be useful to this end. His persevering attempts to justify everything English on principles of pure reason, opened ears to reason that otherwise would have been shut. Above all, he shows always, and always inspires, that unmistakeable love of light which makes even the mistakes of genius full of interest and instruction.

## 1. Of the Importance of Method.

WHAT is that which first strikes us, and strikes us at once, in a man of education, and which, among educated men, so instantly\* distinguishes the man of superior mind, that (as was observed with eminent propriety of the late Edmund Burke) 'we cannot stand under the same arch-way during a shower of rain, without finding him out'? Not the weight or novelty of his remarks; not any unusual interest of facts communicated by him; for we may suppose both the one and the other precluded by the shortness of our intercourse, and the triviality of the subjects. The difference will be impressed and felt, though the conversation should be confined to the state of the weather or the pavement. Still less will it arise from any peculiarity in his words and phrases. For if he be, as we now assume, a well-educated man as well as a man of superior powers, he will not fail to follow the golden rule of Julius Caesar, *insolens verbum, tanquam scopulum, evitare*. Unless where new things necessitate new terms, he will avoid an unusual word as a rock. It must have been among the earliest lessons of his youth, that the breach of this precept, at all times hazardous, becomes ridiculous in the topics of ordinary conversation. There remains but one other point of distinction possible; and this must be, and in fact is, the true cause of the impression made on us. It is the unpremeditated and evidently habitual arrangement of his words, grounded on the habit of foreseeing, in each integral part, or (more plainly) in every sentence, the whole that he then intends to communicate. However irregular and desultory his talk, there is method in the fragments.

Listen, on the other hand, to an ignorant man, though perhaps shrewd and able in his particular calling, whether

he be describing or relating. We immediately perceive, that his memory alone is called into action; and that the objects and events recur in the narration in the same order, and with the same accompaniments, however accidental or impertinent, in which they had first occurred to the narrator. The necessity of taking breath, the efforts of recollection, and the abrupt rectification of its failures, produce all his pauses; and with exception of the 'and then,' the 'and there,' and the still less significant 'and so,' they constitute likewise all his connections.

Our discussion, however, is confined to method as employed in the formation of the understanding, and in the constructions of science and literature. It would indeed be superfluous to attempt a proof of its importance in the business and economy of active or domestic life. From the cotter's hearth or the workshop of the artizan to the palace or the arsenal, the first merit, that which admits neither substitute nor equivalent, is, that every thing be in its place. Where this charm is wanting, every other merit either loses its name, or becomes an additional ground of accusation and regret. Of one, by whom it is eminently possessed, we say proverbially, he is like clock-work. The resemblance extends beyond the point of regularity, and yet falls short of the truth. Both do, indeed, at once divide and announce the silent and otherwise indistinguishable lapse of time. But the man of methodical industry and honourable pursuits does more; he realizes its ideal divisions, and gives a character and individuality to its moments. If the idle are described as killing time, he may be justly said to call it into life and moral being, while he makes it the distinct object not only of the consciousness, but of the conscience. He organizes the hours, and gives them a soul; and that, the very essence of which is to fleet away, and evermore to have been, he

takes up into his own permanence, and communicates to it the imperishableness of a spiritual nature. Of the *good and faithful servant*, whose energies, thus directed, are thus methodized, it is less truly affirmed, that he lives in time, than that time lives in him. His days, months, and years, as the stops and punctual marks in the records of duties performed, will survive the wreck of worlds, and remain extant when time itself shall be no more.

But as the importance of method in the duties of social life is incomparably greater, so are its practical elements proportionably obvious, and such as relate to the will far more than to the understanding. Henceforward, therefore, we contemplate its bearings on the latter.

The difference between the products of a well-disciplined and those of an uncultivated understanding, in relation to what we will now venture to call the science of method, is often and admirably exhibited by our great dramatist. I scarcely need refer my readers to the Clown's evidence, in the first scene of the second act of *Measure for Measure*, or to the Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet*. . . . .

The absence of method, which characterizes the uneducated, is occasioned by an habitual submission of the understanding to mere events and images as such, and independent of any power in the mind to classify or appropriate them. The general accompaniments of time and place are the only relations which persons of this class appear to regard in their statements. As this constitutes their leading feature, the contrary excellence, as distinguishing the well-educated man, must be referred to the contrary habit. Method, therefore, becomes natural to the mind which has been accustomed to contemplate not things only, or for their own sake alone, but likewise and chiefly the relations of things, either their relations to each other, or to the observer, or to the

state and apprehensions of the hearers. To enumerate and analyze these relations, with the conditions under which alone they are discoverable, is to teach the science of method. . .

Exuberance of mind, on the one hand, interferes with the forms of method; but sterility of mind, on the other, wanting the spring and impulse to mental action, is wholly destructive of method itself. For in attending too exclusively to the relations which the past or passing events and objects bear to general truth, and the moods of his own thought, the most intelligent man is sometimes in danger of overlooking that other relation, in which they are likewise to be placed to the apprehension and sympathies of his hearers. His discourse appears like soliloquy intermixed with dialogue. But the uneducated and unreflecting talker overlooks all mental relations, both logical and psychological; and consequently precludes all method which is not purely accidental. Hence the nearer the things and incidents in time and place, the more distant, disjointed, and impertinent to each other, and to any common purpose, will they appear in his narration: and this from the want of a staple, or starting-post, in the narrator himself; from the absence of the leading thought, which, borrowing a phrase from the nomenclature of legislation, I may not inaptly call the initiative. On the contrary, where the habit of method is present and effective, things the most remote and diverse in time, place, and outward circumstance, are brought into mental contiguity and succession, the more striking as the less expected.—*The Friend*.

## 2. Veracity.

THE assertion, that truth is often no less dangerous than falsehood, sounds less offensively at the first hearing, only because it hides its deformity in an equivocation, or double meaning of the word truth. What may be rightly affirmed

of truth, used as synonymous with verbal accuracy, is transferred to it in its higher sense of veracity. By verbal truth we mean no more than the correspondence of a given fact to given words. In moral truth, we involve likewise the intention of the speaker, that his words should correspond to his thoughts in the sense in which he expects them to be understood by others: and in this latter import we are always supposed to use the word, whenever we speak of truth absolutely, or as a possible subject of moral merit or demerit. It is verbally true, that in the sacred Scriptures it is written: 'As is the good, so is the sinner, and he that sweareth as he that feareth an oath. A man hath no better thing under the sun, than to eat, and to drink, and to be merry. There is one event unto all: the living know they shall die, but the dead know not anything, neither have they any more a reward.' But he who should repeat these words, with this assurance, to an ignorant man in the hour of his temptation, lingering at the door of the alehouse, or hesitating as to the testimony required of him in the court of justice, would, spite of this verbal truth, be a liar, and the murderer of his brother's conscience. Veracity, therefore, not mere accuracy; to convey truth, not merely to say it, is the point of duty in dispute: and the only difficulty in the mind of an honest man arises from the doubt, whether more than veracity, that is, the truth and nothing but the truth—is not demanded of him by the law of conscience; whether it does not exact simplicity; that is, the truth only, and the whole truth. If we can solve this difficulty, if we can determine the conditions under which the law of universal reason commands the communication of the truth independently of consequences, we shall then be enabled to judge whether there is any such probability of evil consequences, from such communication, as can justify the assertion of the occasional criminality, as

can perplex us in the conception, or disturb us in the performance of our duty.

The conscience, or effective reason, commands the design of conveying an adequate notion of the thing spoken of, when this is practicable: but at all events a right notion, or none at all. A schoolmaster is under the necessity of teaching a certain rule in simple arithmetic empirically,—(do so and so, and the sum will always prove true);—the necessary truth of the rule—that is, that the rule having been adhered to, the sum must always prove true—requiring a knowledge of the higher mathematics for its demonstration. He, however, conveys a right notion, though he cannot convey the adequate one.—*The Friend*.

### 3. Milton and Jeremy Taylor.

If ever two great men might seem, during their whole lives, to have moved in direct opposition, though neither of them has at any time introduced the name of the other, Milton and Jeremy Taylor were they. The former commenced his career by attacking the Church-Liturgy and all set forms of prayer. The latter, but far more successfully, by defending both. Milton's next work was then against the Prelacy and the, then existing Church-Government—Taylor's in vindication and support of them. Milton became more and more a stern republican, or rather an advocate for that religious and moral aristocracy which, in his day, was *called* republicanism, and which, even more than royalism itself, is the direct antipode of modern jacobinism. Taylor, as more and more sceptical concerning the fitness of men in general for power, became more and more attached to the prerogatives of monarchy. From Calvinism with a still decreasing respect



for Fathers, Councils, and for Church-Antiquity in general, Milton seems to have ended in an indifference, if not a dislike, to *all* forms of ecclesiastic government, and to have retreated wholly into the inward and spiritual church-communion of his own spirit with the Light, that lighteth every man that cometh into the world. Taylor, with a growing reverence for authority, an increasing sense of the insufficiency of the Scriptures without the aids of tradition and the consent of authorized interpreters, advanced as far in his approaches (not indeed to Popery, but) to Catholicism, as a conscientious minister of the English Church could well venture. Milton would be, and would utter the same, to all, on all occasions: he would tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. Taylor would become all things to all men, if by any means he might benefit any; hence he availed himself, in his *popular* writings, of opinions and representations which stand often in striking contrast with the doubts and convictions expressed in his more philosophical works. He appears indeed, not *too severely* to have blamed that *management* of truth (*istam falsitatem dispensativam*) authorized and exemplified by almost all the fathers: *Integrum omnino Doctoribus et cœtus Christiani Antistitibus esse, ut dolos versent, falsa veris intermisceant et imprimis religionis hostes fallant, dummodo veritatis commodis et utilitati inserviant.*

The same antithesis might be carried on with the elements of their several intellectual powers. Milton, austere, condensed, imaginative, supporting his truth by direct enunciation of lofty moral sentiment and by distinct visual representations, and in the same spirit overwhelming what he deemed falsehood by moral denunciation and a succession of pictures appalling or repulsive. In his prose, so many metaphors, so many allegorical miniatures. Taylor,

eminently discursive, accumulative, and (to use one of his own words) *agglomerative*; still more rich in images than Milton himself, but images of Fancy, and presented to the common and passive eye, rather than to the eye of the imagination. Whether supporting or assailing, he makes his way either by argument or by appeals to the affections, unsurpassed even by the Schoolmen in subtlety, agility and logic wit, and unrivalled by the most rhetorical of the fathers in the copiousness and vividness of his expressions and illustrations. Here words that convey feelings, and words that flash images, and words of abstract notion, flow together, and at once whirl and rush onward like a stream, at once rapid and full of eddies; and yet still interfused here and there, we see a tongue or isle of smooth water, with some picture in it of earth or sky, landscape or living group of quiet beauty.

Differing, then, so widely, and almost contrariantly, wherein did these great men agree? wherein did they resemble each other? In Genius, in Learning, in unfeigned Piety, in blameless Purity of Life, and in benevolent aspirations and purposes for the moral and temporal improvement of their fellow creatures! Both of them wrote a Latin Accidence, to render education more easy and less painful to children; both of them composed hymns and psalms proportioned to the capacity of common congregations; both, nearly at the same time, set the glorious example of publicly recommending and supporting general Toleration, and the Liberty both of the Pulpit and the Press! In the writings of neither shall we find a single sentence, like those *meek deliverances to God's mercy*, with which LAUD accompanied his votes for the mutilations and loathsome dungeoning of Leighton and others!—nowhere such a pious prayer as we find in Bishop Hall's

memoranda of his own Life, concerning the subtle and witty Atheist that so grievously perplexed and gravelled him at Sir Robert Drury's till *he prayed to the Lord to remove him*, and behold! his prayers were heard; for shortly afterward this philistine-combatant went to London, and there perished of the plague in great misery! In short, nowhere shall we find the least approach, in the lives and writings of John Milton or Jeremy Taylor, to that guarded gentleness, to that sighing reluctance, with which the holy Brethren of the Inquisition deliver over a condemned heretic to the civil magistrate, recommending him to mercy, and *hoping* that the magistrate will treat the erring brother with all possible mildness!—the magistrate, who too well knows what would be his own fate, if he dared offend them by acting on their recommendation.—*Apologetic Preface to Fire, Famine, and Slaughter.*

#### 4. The Use of Works of Imagination in Education.

IN the education of children, love is first to be instilled, and out of love obedience is to be educed. Then impulse and power should be given to the intellect, and the ends of a moral being be exhibited. For this object thus much is effected by works of imagination;—that they carry the mind out of self, and show the possible of the good and the great in the human character. The height, whatever it may be, of the imaginative standard will do no harm; we are commanded to imitate one who is inimitable. We should address ourselves to those faculties in a child's mind, which are first awakened by nature, and consequently first admit of cultivation, that is to say, the memory and the imagination. The comparing power, the judgment, is not at that age active, and ought not to be

forcibly excited, as is too frequently and mistakenly done in the modern systems of education, which can only lead to selfish views, debtor and creditor principles of virtue, and an inflated sense of merit. In the imagination of man exist the seeds of all moral and scientific improvement; chemistry was first alchemy, and out of astrology sprang astronomy. In the childhood of those sciences the imagination opened a way, and furnished materials, on which the ratiocinative powers in a maturer state operated with success. The imagination is the distinguishing characteristic of man as a progressive being; and I repeat that it ought to be carefully guided and strengthened as the indispensable means and instrument of continued amelioration and refinement. Men of genius and goodness are generally restless in their minds in the present, and this, because they are by a law of their nature unremittingly regarding themselves in the future, and contemplating the possible of moral and intellectual advance towards perfection. Thus we live by hope and faith; thus we are for the most part able to realize what we will, and thus we accomplish the end of our being. The contemplation of futurity inspires humility of soul in our judgment of the present.

I think the memory of children cannot, in reason, be too much stored with the objects and facts of natural history. God opens the images of nature, like the leaves of a book, before the eyes of his creature, Man—and teaches him all that is grand and beautiful in the foaming cataract, the glassy lake, and the floating mist.

The common modern novel, in which there is no imagination, but a miserable struggle to excite and gratify mere curiosity, ought, in my judgment, to be wholly forbidden to children.—*Literary Remains.*

### 5. Changes of Style in English Literature.

SUCH change as really took place in the style of our literature after Chaucer's time is with difficulty perceptible, on account of the dearth of writers, during the civil wars of the 15th century. But the transition was not very great; and accordingly we find in Latimer and our other venerable authors about the time of Edward VI, as in Luther, the general characteristics of the earliest manner;—that is, every part popular, and the discourse addressed to all degrees of intellect;—the sentences short, the tone vehement, and the connexion of the whole produced by honesty and singleness of purpose, intensity of passion, and pervading importance of the subject.

Another and a very different species of style is that which was derived from, and founded on, the admiration and cultivation of the classical writers, and which was more exclusively addressed to the learned class in society. I have previously mentioned Boccaccio as the original Italian introducer of this manner, and the great models of it in English are Hooker, Bacon, Milton, and Taylor, although it may be traced in many other authors of that age. In all these the language is dignified but plain, genuine English, although elevated and brightened by superiority of intellect in the writer. Individual words themselves are always used by them in their precise meaning, without either affectation or slipslop. The letters and state papers of Sir Francis Walsingham are remarkable for excellence in style of this description. In Jeremy Taylor the sentences are often extremely long, and yet are generally so perspicuous in consequence of their logical structure, that they require no re-perusal to be understood; and it is for the most part the same in Milton and Hooker. . . .

The unity in these writers is produced by the unity of the subject, and the perpetual growth and evolution of the thoughts, one generating, and explaining, and justifying, the place of another, not, as it is in Seneca, where the thoughts, striking as they are, are merely strung together like beads, without any causation or progression. The words are selected because they are the most appropriate, regard being had to the dignity of the total impression, and no merely big phrases are used where plain ones would have sufficed, even in the most learned of their works.

There is some truth in a remark, which I believe was made by Sir Joshua Reynolds, that the greatest man is he who forms the taste of a nation, and that the next greatest is he who corrupts it. The true classical style of Hooker and his fellows was easily open to corruption; and Sir Thomas Brown it was, who, though a writer of great genius, first effectually injured the literary taste of the nation by his introduction of learned words, merely because they were learned. . . . But Sir Thomas Brown with all his faults had a genuine idiom; and it is the existence of an individual idiom in each, that makes the principal writers before the Restoration the great patterns or integers of English style. In them the precise intended meaning of a word can never be mistaken; whereas in the later writers, as especially in Pope, the use of words is for the most part purely arbitrary, so that the context will rarely show the true specific sense, but only that something of the sort is designed. A perusal of the authorities cited by Johnson in his dictionary under any leading word, will give you a lively sense of this declension in etymological truth of expression in the writers after the Restoration, or perhaps, strictly, after the middle of the reign of Charles II.

The general characteristic of the style of our literature

down to the period which I have just mentioned, was gravity, and in Milton and some other writers of his day there are perceptible traces of the sternness of republicanism. Soon after the Restoration a material change took place, and the cause of royalism was graced, sometimes disgraced, by every shade of lightness of manner. A free and easy style was considered as a test of loyalty, or at all events, as a badge of the cavalier party; you may detect it occasionally even in Barrow, who is, however, in general remarkable for dignity and logical sequency of expression. . . . From the common opinion that the English style attained its greatest perfection in and about Queen Anne's reign I altogether dissent; not only because it is in one species alone in which it can be pretended that the writers of that age excelled their predecessors, but also because the specimens themselves are not equal, upon sound principles of judgment, to much that had been produced before. The classical structure of Hooker—the impetuous, thought-agglomerating, flood of Taylor—to these there is no pretence of a parallel; and for mere ease and grace, is Cowley inferior to Addison, being as he is so much more thoughtful and full of fancy? Cowley, with the omission of a quaintness here and there, is probably the best model of style for modern imitation in general. Taylor's periods have been frequently attempted by his admirers; you may, perhaps, just catch the turn of a simile or single image, but to write in the real manner of Jeremy Taylor would require as mighty a mind as his. Many parts of Algernon Sidney's treatises afford excellent exemplars of a good modern practical style; and Dryden in his prose works is a still better model, if you add a stricter and purer grammar. It is, indeed, worthy of remark that all our great poets have been good prose writers, as Chaucer, Spenser, Milton; and this probably arose from their just

sense of metre. For a true poet will never confound verse and prose ; whereas it is almost characteristic of indifferent prose writers that they should be constantly slipping into scraps of metre. Swift's style is, in its line, perfect ; the manner is a complete expression of the matter, the terms appropriate, and the artifice concealed. It is simplicity in the true sense of the word.

After the Revolution, the spirit of the nation became much more commercial, than it had been before ; a learned body or clerisy, as such, gradually disappeared, and literature in general began to be addressed to the common miscellaneous public. That public had become accustomed to, and required, a strong stimulus ; and to meet the requisitions of the public taste, a style was produced which by combining triteness of thought with singularity and excess of manner of expression, was calculated at once to soothe ignorance and to flatter vanity. The thought was carefully kept down to the immediate apprehension of the commonest understanding, and the dress was as anxiously arranged for the purpose of making the thought appear something very profound. The essence of this style consisted in a mock antithesis, that is, an opposition of mere sounds, in a rage for personification, the abstract made animate, far-fetched metaphors, strange phrases, metrical scraps, in every thing, in short, but genuine prose. Style is, of course, nothing else but the art of conveying the meaning appropriately and with perspicuity, whatever that meaning may be, and one criterion of style is that it shall not be translatable without injury to the meaning. Johnson's style has pleased many from the very fault of being perpetually translatable ; he creates an impression of cleverness by never saying any thing in a common way. The best specimen of this manner is in Junius, because his antithesis is less merely verbal than Johnson's. Gibbon's



manner is the worst of all; it has every fault of which this peculiar style is capable. Tacitus is an example of it in Latin; in coming from Cicero you feel the *false* immediately.

In order to form a good style, the primary rule and condition is, not to attempt to express ourselves in language before we thoroughly know our own meaning;—when a man perfectly understands himself, appropriate diction will generally be at his command either in writing or speaking. In such cases the thoughts and the words are associated. In the next place preciseness in the use of terms is required, and the test is whether you can translate the phrase adequately into simpler terms, regard being had to the feeling of the whole passage. Try this upon Shakspeare, or Milton, and see if you can substitute other simpler words in any given passage without a violation of the meaning or tone. The source of bad writing is the desire to be something more than a man of sense,—the straining to be thought a genius; and it is just the same in speech making. If men would only say what they have to say in plain terms, how much more eloquent they would be! Another rule is to avoid converting mere abstractions into persons. I believe you will very rarely find in any great writer before the Revolution the possessive case of an inanimate noun used in prose instead of the dependent case, as ‘the watch’s hand,’ for ‘the hand of the watch.’ The possessive or Saxon genitive was confined to persons, or at least to animated subjects. And I cannot conclude this Lecture without insisting on the importance of accuracy of style as being near akin to veracity and truthful habits of mind; he who thinks loosely will write loosely, and, perhaps, there is some moral inconvenience in the common forms of our grammars which give children so many obscure terms for material distinctions. Let me also

exhort you to careful examination of what you read, if it be worth any perusal at all; such examination will be a safeguard from fanaticism, the universal origin of which is in the contemplation of phenomena without investigation into their causes. —*Literary Remains.* •

### LIII.

#### ROBERT SOUTHEY.

1774—1843.

ROBERT SOUTHEY was the son of a draper in Bristol, where he was born in 1774. The chances of his early school life, under a succession of instructors, were various and unsatisfactory until at fourteen he entered Westminster School. His prosperity there was scarcely greater, and in four years he was dismissed on account of a paper on corporal punishment which appeared in the school journal, *The Flagellant*, and provoked the wrath of the head-master. For the same reason he was refused admission at Christ Church, and matriculated in 1792 at Balliol College, Oxford. Here he made himself conspicuous by his republican opinions. He became acquainted with Coleridge in 1794, and entered with him into a wild scheme of emigration to America with two or three other friends, there to form a settlement on the banks of the Susquehannah, and to support and govern themselves on the principles of what they termed a Pantisocracy. This plan came to nothing for want of money. It had, however, cost Southey the goodwill of his aunt, who had been his chief support since the death of his father three years previously. Thenceforward he had to struggle with extreme poverty, and to support not only himself and his wife (whom he had married in 1795) but also her sisters, one of whom was the wife of Coleridge and the other the widow of his friend Lovell, whom he had received into his house with characteristic generosity. Having successively tried and abandoned both Law and Medicine, he devoted himself entirely to literary pursuits. He made his home at Keswick, and there lived for more than forty years, occupied with constant

and unremitting diligence on his books. He was made Poet Laureate in 1813. For the last two years of his life his mind gave way under the pressure of work and domestic affliction. He died in 1843.

Southey was one of the most voluminous writers of his time both in verse and prose. His poems, though far less popular than those of several of his contemporaries, attracted considerable attention, and formed the subject of much literary controversy. They belong chiefly to the earlier period of his life, previous to his appointment to the office of Poet Laureate. His activity as a prose writer was more persistent. He wrote history and biography, edited early romances, published the works of other authors with critical and illustrative notices of his own, and contributed very largely to reviews, chiefly on political and literary topics. As a young man he was strongly infected by the enthusiasm of the revolutionary period in which he lived; afterwards he became a warm supporter of the existing constitution in Church and State, though his general sympathy with plans of social improvement remained unabated.

Southey's peculiar characteristic as a writer is his command of easy, graceful, and vigorous English. He produced no great effect on his generation, either as a thinker or imaginative writer: his literary criticisms, though generally sensible, are seldom striking or profound. But his technical mastery over his own language was great; and, though he wrote incessantly, his style rarely degenerates into carelessness. In this one respect he contrasts favourably with the author who among his contemporaries may best be compared with him for facility of literary production, Sir Walter Scott.

### 1. Collections of English Poets.

THE collections of our poets are either too scanty, or too copious. They reject so many, that we know not why half whom they retain should be admitted; they admit so many, that we know not why any should be rejected. There is a

want of judgment in giving Bavius a place; but when a place has been awarded him, there is a want of justice in not giving Maevius one also. The sentence of Horace concerning middling poets is disproved by daily experience; whatever the gods may do, certainly the public and the booksellers tolerate them. When Dr. Aikin began to re-edit Johnson's collection, it was well observed in the *Monthly Magazine*, 'that to our best writers there should be more commentary; and of our inferior ones less text.' But Johnson begins just where this observation is applicable, and just where a general collection should end. Down to the Restoration it is to be wished that every poet, however unworthy of the name, should be preserved. In the worst volume of elder date, the historian may find something to assist, or direct his enquiries; the antiquarian something to elucidate what requires illustration; the philologist something to insert in the margin of his dictionary. Time does more for books than for wine; it gives worth to what originally was worthless. Those of later date must stand or fall by their own merits, because the sources of information, since the introduction of newspapers, periodical essays, and magazines, are so numerous, that if they are not read for amusement, they will not be recurred to for anything else. The Restoration is the great epoch in our annals, both civil and literary: a new order of things was then established, and we look back to the times beyond, as the Romans under the Empire, to the age of the Republic.—*Preface to Specimens of Later English Poets.*

## 2. The Evils of Half Knowledge.

WERE it not that the present state of popular knowledge is a necessary part of the process of society, a stage through which it must pass in its progress toward something better,

it might reasonably be questioned whether the misinformation of these things be not worse than the ignorance of former ages. For a people who are ignorant and know themselves to be so, will often judge rightly when they are called upon to think at all, acting from common sense, and the unperverted instinct of equity. But there is a kind of half knowledge which seems to disable men even from forming a just opinion of the facts before them,—a sort of squint in the understanding which prevents it from seeing straightforward, and by which all objects are distorted. Men in this state soon begin to confound the distinctions between right and wrong: farewell then to simplicity of heart, and with it farewell to rectitude of judgment! The demonstrations of geometry indeed retain their force with them, for they are gross and tangible: but to all moral propositions, to all finer truths they are insensible; the part of their nature which should correspond with these is stricken with dead palsy. Give men a smattering of law, and they become litigious; give them a smattering of physic, and they become hypochondriacs or quacks, disordering themselves by the strength of imagination, or poisoning others in the presumptuousness of conceited ignorance. But of all men, the smatterer in philosophy is the most intolerable and the most dangerous; he begins by unlearning his Creed and his commandments; and in the process of eradicating what it is the business of all sound education to implant, his duty to God is discarded first, and his duty to his neighbour presently afterwards. As long as he confines himself to private practice, the mischief does not extend beyond his private circle; there indeed it shews itself;—his neighbour's wife may be in some danger, and his neighbour's property also, if the distinctions between *meum* and *tuum* should be practically inconvenient to a man of free opinions. But

when he commences professor of moral and political philosophy for the benefit of the public, the fables of old credulity are then verified; his very breath becomes venomous, and every page which he sends abroad carries with it poison to the unsuspecting reader.—*Essays*.

### 3. Advice to Young Readers.

ALL Readers however,—thank Heaven, and what is left among us of that best and rarest of all senses called Common Sense,—all Readers however are not critical. There are still some who are willing to be pleased, and thankful for being pleased; and who do not think it necessary that they should be able to *parse* their pleasure, like a lesson, and give a rule or a reason why they are pleased, or why they ought not to be pleased. There are still readers who have never read an Essay upon Taste;—and if they take my advice they never will; for they can no more improve their taste by so doing, than they could improve their appetite or their digestion by studying a cookery book.

I have something to say to all classes of Readers: and therefore having thus begun to speak of one, with that class I will proceed. It is to the youthful part of my lectors—(why not lectors as well as auditors?) it is *virginibus puerisque* that I now address myself. Young Readers, you whose hearts are open, whose understandings are not yet hardened, and whose feelings are neither exhausted nor encrusted by the world, take from me a better rule than any professors of criticism will teach you!

Would you know whether the tendency of a book is good or evil, examine in what state of mind you lay it down. Has it induced you to suspect that what you have been accustomed to think unlawful may after all be innocent, and

that that may be harmless which you have hitherto been taught to think dangerous? Has it tended to make you dissatisfied and impatient under the controul of others; and disposed you to relax in that self government, without which both the laws of God and man tell us there can be no virtue—and consequently no happiness? Has it attempted to abate your admiration and reverence for what is great and good, and to diminish in you the love of your country and your fellow creatures? Has it addressed itself to your pride, your vanity, your selfishness, or any other of your evil propensities? Has it defiled the imagination with what is loathsome, and shocked the heart with what is monstrous? Has it disturbed the sense of right and wrong which the Creator has implanted in the human soul? If so—if you are conscious of all or any of these effects,—or if having escaped from all, you have felt that such were the effects it was intended to produce, throw the book in the fire whatever name it may bear in the title page! Throw it in the fire, young man, though it should have been the gift of a friend!—young lady away with the whole set, though it should be the prominent furniture of a rose-wood book case!—*The Doctor.*

#### 4. School Friendships.

SCHOOL friendships arise out of sympathy of disposition at an age when the natural disposition is under little controul and less disguise; and there are reasons enough, of a less melancholy kind than Cowper contemplated, why so few of these blossoms set, and of those which afford a promise of fruit, why so small a proportion should bring it to maturity. 'The amity that wisdom knits not, folly may easily unite;' and even when not thus dissolved, the mutual attachment



**ROBERT SOUTHEY.**

which in boyhood is continually strengthened by similarity of circumstance and pursuits, dies a natural death in most cases when that similarity ceases. If one goes north in the intellectual bearings of his course in life, and the other south, they will at last be far as the poles asunder. If their pursuits are altogether different, and their opinions repugnant, in the first case they cease to think of each other with any warm interest ; in the second, if they think of each other at all, it is with an uncomfortable feeling, and a painful sense of change. . . .

It may indeed safely be affirmed, that generous minds when they have once known each other, never can be alienated as long as both retain the characteristics which brought them into union. No distance of place or lapse of time can lessen the friendship of those who are thoroughly persuaded of each other's worth. There are even some broken attachments in friendship as well as in love which nothing can destroy, and it sometimes happens that we are not conscious of their strength till after the disruption.

There are few persons known to me in years long past, but with whom I lived in no particular intimacy then, and have held no correspondence since, whom I could not now meet without an emotion of pleasure deep enough to partake of pain, and who, I doubt not, entertain for me feelings of the same kind and degree ; whose eyes sparkle when they hear, and glisten sometimes when they speak of me ; and who think of me as I do of them, with an affection that increases as we advance in years. This is because our moral and intellectual sympathies have strengthened ; and because, though far asunder, we know that we are travelling the same road towards our resting place in heaven. 'There is such a pleasure as this,' says Cowper, 'which would want explanation to some folks, being perhaps a mystery to those

whose hearts are a mere muscle, and serve only for the purposes of an even circulation.'—*The Doctor*.

### 5. Shaving.

THE poet Campbell is said to have calculated that a man who shaves himself every day, and lives to the age of threescore and ten, expends during his life as much time in the act of shaving, as would have sufficed for learning seven languages.

The poet Southey is said to carry shaving to its *ne plus ultra* of independency, for he shaves *sans* looking-glass, *sans* shaving-brush, *sans* soap, or substitute for soap, *sans* hot-water, *sans* cold-water, *sans* every thing except a razor. And yet among all the characters which he bears in the world, no one has ever given him credit for being a cunning shaver!

(Be it here observed in a parenthesis that I suppose the word *shaver* in this so common expression to have been corrupted from shaveling; the old contemptuous word for a Priest.)

But upon reflection, I am not certain whether it is of the poet Southey that this is said, or of the poet Wordsworth. I may easily have confounded one with the other in my recollections, just as what was said of Romulus might have been repeated of Remus while they were both living and flourishing together; or as a mistake in memory might have been made between the two Kings of Brentford when they both quitted the stage, each smelling to his nosegay, which it was who made his exit P. S. and which O. P.

Indeed we should never repeat what is said of public characters (a denomination under which all are to be included who figure in public life, from the high, mighty and most illustrious Duke of Wellington at this time, down to

little Waddington) without qualifying it as common report, or as newspaper or magazine authority. It is very possible that the Lake poets may, both of them, shave after the manner of other men. The most attached friends of Mr. Rogers can hardly believe that he has actually said all the good things which are ascribed to him in a certain weekly journal; and Mr. Campbell may not have made the remark which I have repeated, concerning the time employed in mowing the chin, and the use to which the minutes that are so spent might be applied. . . .

Some one else may have made the calculation concerning shaving and languages, some other poet, or prosier, or one who never attempted either prose, or rhyme. Was he not the first person who proposed the establishment of the London University, and if this calculation were his, is it possible that he should not have proposed a plan for it founded thereon, which might have entitled the new institution to assume the title of the Polyglot College?—*The Doctor*.

### 6. The Church Clock.

PERHAPS of all the works of man sun-dials and church-clocks are those which have conveyed most feeling to the human heart; the clock more than the sun-dial, because it speaks to the ear as well as to the eye, and by night as well as by day. Our forefathers understood this, and therefore they not only gave a Tongue to Time, but provided that he should speak often to us and remind us that the hours are passing. Their quarter-boys and their chimes were designed for this moral purpose as much as the memento which is so commonly seen upon an old clock-face,—and so seldom upon a new one. I never hear chimes that they do not remind me of those which were formerly the first sounds

I heard in the morning, which used to quicken my step on my way to school, and which announced my release from it, when the same tune methought had always a merrier import. When I remember their tones, life seems to me like a dream, and a train of recollections arises, which if it were allowed to have its course would end in tears.—*The Doctor.*

## LIV.

### CHARLES LAMB.

1775—1834.

CHARLES LAMB, born in the Inner Temple, 10th of February, 1775; educated in Christ's Hospital; afterwards a clerk in the Accountant's Office, East-India House; pensioned off from that service, 1825, after thirty-three years' service; is now a gentleman at large; can remember few specialities in his life worth noting, except that he once caught a swallow flying (*teste sua manu*). Below the middle stature; cast of face slightly Jewish, with no Judaic tinge in his complexional religion; stammers abominably, and is therefore more apt to discharge his occasional conversation in a quaint aphorism, or a poor quibble, than in set and edifying speeches; has consequently been libelled as a person always aiming at wit; which, as he told a dull fellow that charged him with it, is at least as good as aiming at dulness. A small eater, but not drinker; confesses a partiality for the production of the juniper-berry; was a fierce smoker of tobacco, but may be resembled to a volcano burnt out, emitting only now and then a casual puff. Has been guilty of obtruding upon the public a tale, in prose, called 'Rosamund Gray;' a dramatic sketch, named 'John Woodvil;' a 'Farewell Ode to Tobacco,' with sundry other poems, and light prose matter, collected in two slight crown octavos, and pompously christened his works, though in fact they were his recreations. His true works may be found on the shelves of Leadenhall Street, filling some hundred folios. He is also the true Elia, whose Essays are extant in a little volume, published a year or two since, and rather better known

from that name without a meaning than from anything he has done, or can hope to do, in his own name. He was also the first to draw the public attention to the old English dramatists, in a work called 'Specimens of English Dramatic Writers who lived about the Time of Shakspeare,' published about fifteen years since. In short, all his merits and demerits to set forth would take to the end of Mr. Upcott's book, and then not be told truly.

He died 18 , much lamented.

Witness his hand.

18th April, 1827.

CHARLES LAMB.

To this humorous account of himself it need only be added that he lived nine years after his retirement from the India Office, dying in 1834. His companion through life was a sister afflicted with attacks of insanity. In a fit of frenzy, when Lamb was but twenty-two, she killed their mother, and was placed in an asylum. When she recovered, Lamb undertook the charge of her. For her sake he remained unmarried, and devoted himself to this office with unremitting tenderness. Lamb's happy and genial nature, and his dependence on and affection for his friends, made him the delight of the society in which he lived.

Charles Lamb still remains one of the foremost English humorists of the nineteenth century. He reconciles, to a greater degree than any of his contemporaries or successors, the quaintness of those older authors, whom no one has ever more fully appreciated, with the common sense of his own age. His thought, like his life, was, by his own confession, fragmentary; but the broken pieces that are left to us are like broken gold, they sparkle with wit while they glow with a rich and genial humanity.

### 1. A Quakers' Meeting.

READER, would'st thou know what true peace and quiet mean; would'st thou find a refuge from the noises and

clamours of the multitude; would'st thou enjoy at once solitude and society; would'st thou possess the depth of thine own spirit in stillness, without being shut out from the consolatory faces of thy species; would'st thou be alone and yet accompanied; solitary yet not desolate; singular, yet not without some to keep thee in countenance; a unit in aggregate; a simple in composite:—come with me into a Quakers' Meeting.

Dost thou love silence deep as that 'before the winds were made?' go not out into the wilderness, descend not into the profundities of the earth; shut not up thy casements; nor pour wax into the little cells of thy ears, with little-faithed, self-mistrusting Ulysses:—retire with me into a Quakers' Meeting. . . . . Frequently it is broken up without a word having been spoken. But the mind has been fed. You go away with a sermon not made with hands. You have been in the milder caverns of Trophonius; or as in some den, where that fiercest and savagest of all wild creatures, the *Tongue*, that unruly member, has strangely lain tied up and captive. You have bathed with stillness.—O, when the spirit is sore fretted, even tired to sickness of the janglings and nonsense-noises of the world, what a balm and a solace it is to go and seat yourself for a quiet half-hour upon some undisputed corner of a bench among the gentle Quakers. Their garb and stillness conjoined, present a uniformity, tranquil and herd-like—as in the pasture—'forty feeding like one.'—The very garments of a Quaker seem incapable of receiving a soil; and cleanliness in them to be something more than the absence of its contrary. Every Quakeress is a lily; and when they come up in bands to their Whitsun-conferences, whitening the easterly streets of the metropolis, from all parts of the United Kingdom, they show like troops of the Shining Ones.—*Essays of Elia*.

## 2. The Scotchman.

I CANNOT like all people alike. I have been trying all my life to like Scotchmen, and am obliged to desist from the experiment in despair. They cannot like me—and in truth, I never knew one of that nation who attempted to do it. We know one another at first sight. There is an order of imperfect intellects (under which mine must be content to rank) which in its constitution is essentially anti-Caledonian. The owners of the sort of faculties I allude to, have minds rather suggestive than comprehensive. They have no pretences to much clearness or precision in their ideas, or in their manner of expressing them. Their intellectual wardrobe (to confess fairly) has few whole pieces in it. They are content with fragments and scattered pieces of Truth. They beat up a little game and leave it to knottier heads to run it down. The light that lights them is not steady and polar, but mutable and shifting; waxing and again waning . . . They cannot speak always as if they were upon their oath . . . they are no systematizers, and would but err more by attempting it . . . The brain of a true Caledonian is constituted upon quite a different plan. His Minerva is born in panoply. You are never admitted to see his ideas in their growth, if indeed they do grow, and are not rather put together upon principles of clock-work. You never catch his mind in an undress. He never hints or suggests anything, but unlades his stock of ideas in perfect order . . . His riches are always about him . . . You cannot cry halves to anything that he finds. He does not find but bring. You never witness his first apprehension of a thing. His understanding is always at its meridian . . . The twilight of dubiety never falls upon him. Is he orthodox—he has no doubts. Is he an infidel—he has none either . . . He



always keeps the path. You cannot make excursions with him, for he sets you right. His taste never fluctuates. His morality never abates . . . . You must speak upon the square with him. He stops a metaphor like a suspected person in an enemy's country. 'A healthy book,' said one of his countrymen to me, who had ventured to give that appellation to *John Bunce*. 'Did I catch rightly what you said? I have heard of a man in health, and of a healthy state of body, but I do not see how that epithet can be properly applied to a book.' Above all, you must beware of indirect expressions before a Caledonian. Clap an extinguisher upon your irony, if you are unhappily blest with a vein of it. Remember you are upon your oath. I have a print of a graceful female after Leonardo da Vinci, which I was showing off to Mr.——. After he had examined it minutely I ventured to ask him how he liked *My Beauty*, (a foolish name it goes by among my friends) when he very gravely assured me, that 'he had considerable respect for my character and talents' (so he was pleased to say) 'but had not given himself much thought about the degree of my personal pretensions' . . . . Persons of this nation are particularly fond of affirming a truth which nobody doubts . . . . I was present not long since at a party of North Britons where a son of Burns was expected, and happened to drop a silly expression (in my South British way) that I wished it were the father instead of the son, when four of them started up at once to inform me that 'that was impossible, because he was dead.'—*Essays of Elia*.

## 3. The Beggar.

POOR man reproaches poor man in the street with impolitic mention of his condition, his own being a shade better; while the rich pass by and jeer at both. No rascal, comparatively, insults a beggar, or thinks of weighing purses with him. He is not in the scale of comparison. He is not under the measure of property. He confessedly hath none, any more than a dog or a sheep. No one twitteth him with ostentation above his means. No one accuses him of pride, or upbraideth him with mock humility. None jostle with him for the wall, or pick quarrels for precedency. No wealthy neighbour seeketh to eject him from his tenement. No man sues him. No man goes to law with him. If I were not the independent gentleman that I am, rather than I would be a retainer to the great, a led captive, or a poor relation, I would choose, out of the delicacy and true greatness of my mind to be a Beggar.

Rags, which are the reproach of poverty, are the Beggar's robes, and graceful insignia of his profession—his tenure, his full dress, the suit in which he is expected to show himself in public. He is never out of the fashion, or limpeth awkwardly behind it. He is not required to put on Court mourning. He weareth all colours, fearing none. His costume hath undergone less change than the Quaker's. He is the only man in the universe who is not obliged to study appearances. The ups and downs of the world concern him no longer. He alone continueth in one stay. The price of stock or land affecteth him not. The fluctuations of prosperity at worst but change his customers. He is not expected to become bail or surety for any one. No man troubleth him with questioning his religion or politics. He is the only free man in the universe.—*Essays of Elia*.

## 4. New Year's Eve.

EVERY man hath two birth-days: two days, at least, in every year, which set him upon revolving the lapse of time, as it affects his mortal duration. The one is that which in an especial manner he termeth *his*. In the gradual desuetude of old observances, this custom of solemnizing our proper birth-day hath nearly passed away, or is left to children, who reflect nothing at all about the matter, nor understand anything in it beyond cake and orange. But the birth of a New Year is of an interest too wide to be pretermitted by king or cobbler. No one ever regarded the first of January with indifference. It is that from which all date their time, and count upon what is left. It is the nativity of our common Adam.

Of all sound of all bells—(bells, the music nighest bordering upon heaven)—most solemn and touching is the peal which rings out the Old Year. I never hear it without a gathering-up of my mind to a concentration of all the images that have been diffused over the past twelvemonth; all I have done or suffered, performed or neglected—in that regretted time. I begin to know its worth, as when a person dies. It takes a personal colour; nor was it a poetical flight in a contemporary, when he exclaimed,

‘I saw the skirts of the departing Year.’

It is no more than what in sober sadness every one of us seems to be conscious of, in that awful leave-taking. I am sure I felt it, and all felt it with me, last night; though some of my companions affected rather to manifest an exhilaration at the birth of the coming year, than any very tender regrets for the decease of its predecessor. But I am none of those who—

'Welcome the coming, speed the parting guest.'

I am naturally, beforehand, shy of novelties; new books, new faces, new years,—from some mental twist which makes it difficult in me to face the prospective. I have almost ceased to hope; and am sanguine only in the prospects of other (former) years. I plunge into foregone visions and conclusions. I encounter pell-mell with past disappointments. I am armour-proof against old discouragements. I forgive, or overcome in fancy, old adversaries. I play over again *for love*, as the gamblers phrase it, games, for which I once paid so dear. I would scarce now have any of those untoward accidents and events of my life reversed. I would no more alter them than the incidents of some well-contrived novel. . . . .

In a degree beneath manhood, it is my infirmity to look back upon those early days. Do I advance a paradox, when I say, that, skipping over the intervention of forty years, a man may have leave to love *himself*, without the imputation of self-love?

If I know aught of myself, no one whose mind is introspective—and mine is painfully so—can have a less respect for his present identity, than I have for the man Elia. I know him to be light, and vain, and humoursome; a notorious . . . ; addicted to . . . ; averse from counsel, neither taking it nor offering it; — . . . besides; a stammering buffoon; what you will; lay it on, and spare not: I subscribe to it all, and much more than thou canst be willing to lay at his door—but for the child Elia, that 'other me,' there, in the back ground—I must take leave to cherish the remembrance of that young master—with as little reference, I protest, to this stupid changeling of five-and-forty, as if it had been a child of some other house, and not of my parents. I can cry over its patient small-pox

at five, and rougher medicaments. I can lay its poor fevered head upon the sick pillow at Christ's, and wake with it in surprise at the gentle posture of maternal tenderness hanging over it, that unknown had watched its sleep. I know how it shrank from any the least colour of falsehood. God help thee, Elia, how art thou changed!—Thou art sophisticated.—I know how honest, how courageous (for a weakling) it was—how religious, how imaginative, how hopeful! From what have I not fallen, if the child I remember was indeed myself,—and not some dissembling guardian, presenting a false identity, to give the rule to my unpractised steps, and regulate the tone of my moral being! . . . . .

The elders, with whom I was brought up, were of a character not likely to let slip the sacred observance of any old institution; and the ringing out of the Old Year was kept by them with circumstances of peculiar ceremony.—In those days the sound of those midnight chimes, though it seemed to raise hilarity in all around me, never failed to bring a train of pensive imagery into my fancy. Yet I then scarce conceived what it meant, or thought of it as a reckoning that concerned me. Not childhood alone, but the young man till thirty, never feels practically that he is mortal. He knows it indeed, and, if need were, he could preach a homily on the fragility of life; but he brings it not home to himself; any more than in a hot June we can appropriate to our imagination the freezing days of December. But now, shall I confess the truth?—I feel these audits but too powerfully. I begin to count the probabilities of my duration, and to grudge at the expenditure of moments and shortest periods, like misers' farthings. In proportion as the years both lessen and shorten, I set more count upon their periods, and would fain lay my

ineffectual finger upon the spoke of the great wheel. I am not content to pass away 'like a weaver's shuttle.' Those metaphors solace me not, nor sweeten the unpalatable draught of mortality. I care not to be carried with the tide, that smoothly bears human life to eternity; and reluctant at the inevitable course of destiny. I am in love with this green earth; the face of town and country; the unspeakable rural solitudes, and the sweet security of streets. I would set up my tabernacle here. I am content to stand still at the age to which I am arrived; I, and my friends: to be no younger, no richer, no handsomer. I do not want to be weaned by age; or drop, like mellow fruit, as they say, into the grave.—Any alteration, on this earth of mine, in diet or in lodging, puzzles and discomposes me. My household-gods plant a terrible fixed foot, and are not rooted up without blood. They do not willingly seek Lavinian shores. A new state of being staggers me.

Sun, and sky, and breeze, and solitary walks, and summer holidays, and the greenness of fields, and the delicious juices of meats and fishes, and society, and the cheerful glass, and candle-light, and fire-side conversations, and innocent vanities, and jests, and *in my itself*—do these things go out with life?

Can a ghost laugh, or shake his gaunt sides, when you are pleasant with him?

And you, my midnight darlings, my Folios! must I part with the intense delight of having you (huge armfuls) in my embraces? Must knowledge come to me, if it come at all, by some awkward experiment of intuition, and no longer by this familiar process of reading?

Shall I enjoy friendships there, wanting the smiling indications which point me to them here,—the recognisable face—the 'sweet assurance of a look'—?—*Essays of Elia.*

**5. Popular Fallacies—That we should Rise with the Lark.**

AT what precise minute that little airy musician doffs his night gear, and prepares to tune up his unseasonable matins, we are not naturalists enough to determine. But for a mere human gentleman—that has no orchestra business to call him from his warm bed to such preposterous exercises—we take ten, or half after ten (eleven, of course, during this Christmas solstice), to be the very earliest hour at which he can begin to think of abandoning his pillow. To think of it, we say; for to do it in earnest requires another half hour's good consideration. Not but there are pretty sun-risings, as we are told, and such like gawds, abroad in the world, in summer-time especially, some hours before what we have assigned; which a gentleman may see, as they say, only for getting up. But having been tempted once or twice, in earlier life, to assist at those ceremonies, we confess our curiosity abated. We are no longer ambitious of being the sun's courtiers, to attend at his morning levees. We hold the good hours of the dawn too sacred to waste them upon such observances; which have in them, besides, something Pagan and Persic. To say truth, we never anticipated our usual hour, or got up with the sun (as 'tis called), to go a journey, or upon a foolish whole day's pleasuring, but we suffered for it all the long hours after in listlessness and headaches; Nature herself sufficiently declaring her sense of our presumption in aspiring to regulate our frail waking courses by the measures of that celestial and sleepless traveller. We deny not that there is something sprightly and vigorous, at the outset especially, in these break-of-day excursions. It is flattering to get the start of a lazy world; to conquer death by proxy in his image. But the seeds of

sleep and mortality are in us ; and we pay usually, in strange qualms before night falls, the penalty of the unnatural inversion. Therefore, while the busy part of mankind are fast huddling on their clothes, are already up and about their occupations, content to have swallowed their sleep by wholesale ; we choose to linger a-bed, and digest our dreams. It is the very time to recombine the wandering images, which night in a confused mass presented ; to snatch them from forgetfulness ; to shape, and mould them. Some people have no good of their dreams. Like fast feeders, they gulp them too grossly, to taste them curiously. We love to chew the cud of a foregone vision : to collect the scattered rays of a brighter phantasm, or act over again, with firmer nerves, the sadder nocturnal tragedies ; to drag into day-light a struggling and half-vanishing night-mare ; to handle and examine the terrors, or the airy solaces. We have too much respect for these spiritual communications to let them go so lightly. We are not so stupid, or so careless as that Imperial forgetter of his dreams, that we should need a seer to remind us of the form of them. They seem to us to have as much significance as our waking concerns : or rather to import us more nearly, as more nearly we approach by years to the shadowy world, whither we are hastening. We have shaken hands with the world's business ; we have done with it ; we have discharged ourself of it. Why should we get up ? we have neither suit to solicit, nor affairs to manage. The drama has shut in upon us at the fourth act. We have nothing here to expect, but in a short time a sick bed, and a dismissal. We delight to anticipate death by such shadows as night affords. We are already half acquainted with ghosts. We were never much in the world. Disappointment early struck a dark veil between us and its dazzling illusions. Our spirits showed grey before our hairs. The mighty



changes of the world already appear as 'but the vain stuff out of which dramas are composed. We have asked no more of life than what the mimic images in play-houses present us with. Even those types have waxed fainter. Our clock appears to have struck. We are SUPERANNUATED. In this dearth of mundane satisfaction, we contract politic alliances with shadows. It is good to have friends at court. The abstracted media of dreams seem no ill introduction to that spiritual presence, upon which, in no long time, we expect to be thrown. We are trying to know a little of the usages of that colony; to learn the language, and the faces we shall meet with there, that we may be the less awkward at our first coming among them. We willingly call a phantom our fellow, as knowing we shall soon be of their dark companionship. Therefore, we cherish dreams. We try to spell in them the alphabet of the invisible world; and think we know already, how it shall be with us. Those uncouth shapes, which, while we clung to flesh and blood, affrighted us, have become familiar. We feel attenuated into their meagre essences, and have given the hand of half-way approach to incorporeal being. We once thought life to be something; but it has unaccountably fallen from us before its time. Therefore we choose to dally with visions. The sun has no purposes of ours to light us to. Why should we get up?—*The last Essays of Elia.*

### 6. On the Death of Coleridge.

WHEN I heard of the death of Coleridge, it was without grief. It seemed to me that he long had been on the confines of the next world,—that he had a hunger for eternity. I grieved then that I could not grieve. But, since, I feel how great a part he was of me. His great and dear

spirit haunts me. I cannot think a thought, I cannot make a criticism on men or books, without an ineffectual turning and reference to him. He was the proof and touchstone of all my cogitations. He was a Grecian (or in the first form) at Christ's Hospital, where I was Deputy-Grecian; and the same subordination and deference to him I have preserved through a life-long acquaintance. Great in his writings, he was greatest in his conversation. In him was disproved that old maxim, that we should allow every one his share of talk. He would talk from morn to 'dewy eve,' nor cease till far midnight; yet who ever would interrupt him? who would obstruct that continuous flow of converse, fetched from Helicon or Zion? He had the tact of making the unintelligible seem plain. Many who read the abstruser parts of his 'Friend' would complain that his works did not answer to his spoken wisdom. They were identical. But he had a tone in oral delivery which seemed to convey sense to those who were otherwise imperfect recipients. He was my fifty-years-old friend without a dissension. Never saw I his likeness, nor probably can the world see it again. I seem to love the house he died at more passionately than when he lived. I love the faithful Gilmans more than while they exercised their virtues towards him living. What was his mansion is consecrated to me a chapel.—*Elizana*.

## LV.

### WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

1775—1864.

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR was born at Warwick in 1775. His family, though hardly so distinguished as he imagined it to be, was of considerable antiquity. Few men of letters have ever had greater advantages of position and circumstances. But to Landor they were little else than drawbacks. At Rugby he gained his first classical laurels, but his defiant refusal to ask pardon for a boyish offence caused his dismissal. At Trinity College, Oxford, he fired a fowling-piece into the window of a resident Fellow. For this he was rusticated, and though he might have returned after a temporary exile, he left Oxford for ever. After some years spent to but little purpose as a young man of fashion, he became, by the death of his father, the owner of a considerable estate in Monmouthshire. When the Spaniards rose to arms in 1808, he devoted time and money to their cause, receiving in return a colonel's commission. In 1814, on the restoration of Ferdinand VII, he quitted Spain. The experiment of residence on his property was unsuccessful; in 1815 he left England, and after various changes settled at Florence. In 1835, however, he left his wife and family at Florence, and returned to Bath, where his head-quarters were fixed until 1858. In consequence of a miserable libel issued by him in his old age he had to quit England, and his last years were spent at Florence, where he died in 1864.

The reputation of Landor rests chiefly on his *Imaginary Conversations*. The first series was published in 1824, and the opinion

of Archdeacon Hare that the book 'would live as long as English literature lived,' was re-echoed by Southey and Wordsworth, and other competent judges. The intense energy of the author's mind, his wide range of reading, and, it must be added, his extreme and passionate view of all political questions, are evident in every page of these dialogues. A second series showed no falling off in his powers, and *Pericles and Aspsia*, a more matured but less popular work, exhibits him as perhaps the most successful modern delineator of the manners and thought of ancient Greece.

The style of Landor in poetry and prose is, at times, unequalled. He chiefly excels in manly expression of thought, and in passages of pure pathos. Mr. Emerson has well said of him, 'whoever writes for the love of truth and beauty, and not with ulterior ends, belongs to a sacred class, among whom there are few men of the present age who have a better claim to be numbered than Mr. Landor.'

### 1. Dialogue between William Penn and Lord Peterborough.

*Peterborough.* The worst objection I myself could ever find against the theatre is, that I lose in it my original idea of such men as Caesar and Coriolanus, and, where the loss affects me more deeply, of Juliet and Desdemona. Alexander was a fool to wish for a second world to conquer: but no man is a fool who wishes for the enjoyment of two; the real and the ideal: nor is it anything short of a misfortune, I had almost said of a calamity, to confound them. This is done by the stage: it is likewise done by engravings in books, which have a great effect in weakening the imagination, and are serviceable only to those who have none, and who read negligently and idly. I should be sorry if the most ingenious print in the world were to cover the first impres-

sion left on my mind of such characters as Don Quixote and Sancho: yet probably a very indifferent one might do it; for we cannot master our fancies, nor give them at will a greater or less tenacity, a greater or less promptitude in coming and recurring.

You Friends are no less adverse to representation by painting than by acting.

*Penn.* We do not educate our youth to such professions and practices. Thou, I conceive, art unconcerned and disinterested in this matter.

*Peterborough.* Nearly, but not quite. I am ignorant of the art, and prefer that branch of it which to many seems the lowest; I mean portraiture. I can find flowers in my garden, landscapes in my rides, the works of saints in the Bible, of great statesmen and captains in the historians, and of those who with equal advantages had been the same, in the Newgate Calendar. The best representation of them can only give me a high opinion of the painter's abilities fixed on a point of time. But when I look on a family picture by Vandyke; when I contemplate the elegant and happy father in the midst of his blooming progeny, and the partner of his fortunes and his joy beside him, I am affected very differently, and much more. He who there stands meditating for them some delightful scheme of pleasure or aggrandisement, has bowed his head to calamity, perhaps even to the block. Those roses gathered from the parterre behind, those taper fingers negligently holding them, that hair, the softness of which seems unable to support the riot of its ringlets, are moved away from earth, amid the tears and aching hearts of the very boys and girls who again are looking at me with such unconcern.

Faithfullest recorder of domestic bliss, perpetuator of youth and beauty, vanquisher of time, leading in triumph the Hours

and Seasons, the painter here bestows on me the richest treasures of his enchanting art.—*Imaginary Conversations.*

## 2. The Story of John Wellerby.

“ETHELBERT! I think thou walkest but little; otherwise I should take thee with me, some fine fresh morning, as far as unto the first hamlet on the Cherwell. There lies young Wellerby, who, the year before, was wont to pass many hours of the day poetising amid the ruins of Goldstow nunnery. It is said that he bore a fondness toward a young maiden in that place, formerly a village, now containing but two old farm-houses. In my memory there were still extant several dormitories. Some love-sick girl had recollected an ancient name, and had engraven on a stone with a garden-nail, which lay in rust near it,

POORE ROSAMUND.

I entered these precincts, and beheld a youth of manly form and countenance, washing and wiping a stone with a handful of wet grass; and on my going up to him, and asking what he had found, he showed it to me. The next time I saw him was near the banks of the Cherwell. He had tried, it appears, to forget or overcome his foolish passion, and had applied his whole mind unto study. He was foiled by his competitor; and now he sought consolation in poetry. Whether this opened the wounds that had closed in his youthful breast, and malignant Love, in his revenge, poisoned it; or whether the disappointment he had experienced in finding others preferred to him, first in the paths of fortune, then in those of the muses; he was thought to have died broken-hearted.

“About half a mile from St. John’s College is the termination of a natural terrace, with the Cherwell close under it, in some places bright with yellow and red flowers glancing and

glowing through the stream, and suddenly in others dark with the shadows of many different trees, in broad overbending thickets, and with rushes spear-high, and party-coloured flags.

“After a walk in Midsummer, the immersion of our hands into the cool and closing grass is surely not the least among our animal delights. I was just seated, and the first sensation of rest vibrated in me gently, as though it were music to the limbs, when I discovered by a hollow in the herbage that another was near. The long meadow-sweet and blooming burnet half concealed from me him whom the earth was about to hide totally and for ever.

“Master Batchelor!” said I, “it is ill sleeping by the water-side.”

“No answer was returned. I arose, went to the place, and recognised poor Wellerby. His brow was moist; his cheek was warm. A few moments earlier, and that dismal lake whereunto and wherefrom the waters of life, the buoyant blood, ran no longer, might have received one vivifying ray reflected from my poor casement. I might not indeed have comforted: I have often failed: but there is one who never has; and the strengthener of the bruised reed should have been with us.

“Remembering that his mother did abide one mile further on, I walked forward to the mansion, and asked her what tidings she lately had received of her son. She replied, that having given up his mind to light studies, the fellows of the college would not elect him. The master had warned him before-hand to abandon his selfish poetry, take up manfully the quarterstaff of logic, and wield it for St. John’s, come who would into the ring. “We want our man,” said he to me, “and your son hath failed us in the hour of need. Madam, he hath been foully beaten in the schools by one he might have swallowed, with due exercise.” I rated him, told

him I was poor, and he knew it. He was stung, and threw himself upon my neck, and wept. Twelve days have passed since, and only three rainy ones. I hear he has been seen upon the knoll yonder, but hither he hath not come. I trust he knows at last the value of time, and I shall be heartily glad to see him after this accession of knowledge. Twelve days, it is true, are rather a chink than a gap in time; yet, O gentle Sir! they are that chink which makes the vase quite valueless. There are light words which may never be shaken off the mind they fall on. My child, who was hurt by me, will not let me see the marks.' 'Lady!' said I, 'none are left upon him. Be comforted! thou shalt see him this hour. All that thy God hath not taken is yet thine.'

"She looked at me earnestly, and would have then asked something, but her voice failed her. There was no agony, no motion, save in the lips and cheeks. Being the widow of one who fought under Hawkins, she remembered his courage and sustained the shock, saying calmly, 'God's will be done! I pray that he find me as worthy as he findeth me willing to join them.'

"Now, in her unearthly thoughts, she had led her only son to the bosom of her husband; and in her spirit (which often is permitted to pass the gates of death with holy love) she left them both with their Creator.

"The curate of the village sent those who should bring home the body; and some days afterward he came unto me, beseeching me to write the epitaph. Being no friend to stone-cutters' charges, I entered not into biography, but wrote these few words:—

JOANNES WELLERBY

LITERARUM QUÆSIVIT GLORIAM,

VIDET DEI."

—*Citation and Examination of William Shakespeare.*



### 3. The Death of Hofer.

I PASSED two entire months in Germany, and like the people. On my way I saw Waterloo, an ugly table for an ugly game. At Innsbruck I entered the church in which Andreas Hofer is buried. He lies under a plain slab, on the left, near the door. I admired the magnificent tomb of bronze, in the centre, surrounded by heroes, real and imaginary. They did not fight, tens against thousands; they did not fight for wives and children, but for lands and plunder: therefore they are heroes! My admiration for these works of art was soon satisfied, which perhaps it would not have been in any other place. Snow, mixed with rain, was falling, and was blown by the wind upon the tomb of Hofer. I thought how often he had taken advantage of such weather for his attacks against the enemies of his country, and I seemed to hear his whistle in the wind. At the little village of Landro (I feel a whimsical satisfaction in the likeness of the name to mine) the innkeeper was the friend of this truly great man . . the greatest man that Europe has produced in our days, excepting his true compeer, Kosciusko. Andreas Hofer gave him the chain and crucifix he wore three days before his death. You may imagine this man's enthusiasm, who, because I had said that Hofer was greater than king or emperor, and had made him a present of small value, as the companion and friend of that harmless and irreproachable hero, took this precious relic from his neck and offered it to me. By the order of Buonaparte, the companions of Hofer, eighty in number, were chained, thumbscrewed, and taken out of prison in couples, to see him shot. He had about him one thousand florins, in paper currency, which he

delivered to his confessor, requesting him to divide it impartially among his unfortunate countrymen. The confessor, an Italian who spoke German, kept it, and never gave relief from it to any of them, most of whom were suffering, not only from privation of wholesome air, to which, among other privations, they never had been accustomed, but also from scantiness of nourishment and clothing. Even in Mantua, where, as in the rest of Italy, sympathy is both weak and silent, the lowest of the people were indignant at the sight of so brave a defender of his country, led into the public square to expiate a crime unheard of for many centuries in their nation. When they saw him walk forth, with unaltered countenance and firm step before them; when, stopping on the ground which was about to receive his blood, they heard him with unfaltering voice commend his soul and his country to the Creator; and as if still under his own roof (a custom with him after the evening prayer), implore a blessing for his boys and his little daughter, and for the mother who had reared them up carefully and tenderly thus far through the perils of childhood; finally, when in a lower tone, but earnestly and emphatically, he besought pardon from the Fount of Mercy for her brother, his betrayer, many smote their breasts aloud; many, thinking that sorrow was shameful, lowered their heads and wept; many, knowing that it was dangerous, yet wept too. The people remained upon the spot an unusual time; and the French, fearing some commotion, pretended to have received an order from Buonaparte for the mitigation of the sentence, and publicly announced it. Among his many falsehoods, any one of which would have excluded him for ever from the society of men of honour, this is perhaps the basest; as indeed of all his atrocities the death of Hofer, which he had ordered long before and appointed the time and circumstances, is,

of all his actions, that which the brave and virtuous will reprobate the most severely. He was urged by no necessity, he was prompted by no policy: his impatience of courage in an enemy, his hatred of patriotism and integrity in all, of which he had no idea himself, and saw no image in those about him, outstripped his blind passion for fame, and left him nothing but power and celebrity.

The name of Andreas Hofer will be honoured by posterity far above any of the present age, and together with the most glorious of the last, Washington and Kosciusko. For it rests on the same foundation, and indeed on a higher basis. In virtue and wisdom their co-equal, he vanquished on several occasions a force greatly superior to his own in numbers and in discipline, by the courage and confidence he inspired, and by his brotherly care and anxiety for those who were fighting at his side. Differently, far differently, ought we to estimate the squanderers of human blood and the scorers of human tears. We also may boast of our great men in a cause as great; for without it they could not be so. We may look back upon our Blake; whom the prodigies of a Nelson do not eclipse, nor would he have wished (such was his generosity) to obscure it. Blake was among the founders of freedom; Nelson was the vanquisher of its destroyers; Washington was both; Kosciusko was neither; neither was Hofer. But the aim of all three was alike; and in the armoury of God are suspended the arms the two last of them bore; suspended for success more signal and for vengeance more complete.

I am writing this from Venice, which is among cities what Shakespeare is among men. He will give her immortality by his works which neither her patron saint could do nor her surrounding sea.—*Minor Prose Pieces.*

#### 4. Roger Ascham and Lady Jane Grey.

*Ascham.* THOU art going, my dear young lady, into a most awful state; thou art passing into matrimony and great wealth. God hath willed it: submit in thankfulness.

Thy affections are rightly placed and well distributed. Love is a secondary passion in those who love most, a primary in those who love least. He who is inspired by it in a high degree, is inspired by honour in a higher. it never reaches its plentitude of growth and perfection but in the most exalted minds. Alas! alas!

*Jane.* What aileth my virtuous Ascham? what is amiss? why do I tremble?

*Ascham.* I remember a sort of prophecy, made three years ago: it is a prophecy of thy condition and of my feelings on it. Recollectest thou who wrote, sitting upon the sea-beach the evening after an excursion to the Isle of Wight, these verses?

‘Invisibly bright water! so like air,  
On looking down I feared thou couldst not bear  
My little bark, of all light barks most light,  
And look’d again, and drew me from the sight,  
And, hanging back, breathed each fresh gale aghast,  
And held the bench, not to go on so fast.’

*Jane.* I was very childish when I composed them; and, if I had thought any more about the matter, I should have hoped you had been too generous to keep them in your memory as witnesses against me.

*Ascham.* Nay, they are not much amiss for so young a girl, and there being so few of them, I did not reprove thee. Half an hour, I thought, might have been spent more unprofitably; and I now shall believe it firmly, if thou wilt but be led by them to meditate a little on the

similarity of situation in which thou then wert to what thou art now in.

*Jane.* I will do it, and whatever else you command; for I am weak by nature and very timorous, unless where a strong sense of duty upholdeth and supporteth me. There God acteth, and not his creature.

Those were with me at sea who would have been attentive to me if I had seemed to be afraid, even though worshipful men and women were in the company; so that something more powerful threw my fear overboard. Yet I never will go again upon the water.

*Ascham.* Exercise that beauteous couple, that mind and body, much and variously, but at home, at home, Jane! indoors, and about things indoors; for God is there too. We have rocks and quick-sands on the banks of our Thames, O lady, such as Ocean never heard of; and many (who knows how soon!) may be engulfed in the current under their garden-walls.

*Jane.* Thoroughly do I now understand you. Yes indeed, I have read evil things of courts; but I think nobody can go out bad who entereth good, if timely and true warning shall have been given.

*Ascham.* I see perils on perils which thou dost not see, albeit thou art wiser than thy poor old master. And it is not because Love hath blinded thee, for that surpasseth his supposed omnipotence; but it is because thy tender heart, having always leant affectionately upon good, hath felt and known nothing of evil.

I once persuaded thee to reflect much: let me now persuade thee to avoid the habitude of reflection, to lay aside books, and to gaze carefully and steadfastly on what is under and before thee.

*Jane.* I have well bethought me of my duties: O how

extensive they are! what a goodly and fair inheritance! But tell me, would you command me never more to read Cicero and Epictetus and Plutarch and Polybius? The others I do resign: they are good for the arbour and for the gravel-walk: yet leave unto me, I beseech you, my friend and father, leave unto me for my fireside and for my pillow, truth, eloquence, courage, constancy.

*Ascham.* Read them on thy marriage-bed, on thy child-bed, on thy death-bed. Thou spotless undrooping lily, they have fenced thee right well. These are the men for men: these are to fashion the bright and blessed creatures whom God one day shall smile upon in thy chaste bosom. Mind thou thy husband.

*Jane.* I sincerely love the youth who hath espoused me; I love him with the fondest, the most solicitous affection; I pray to the Almighty for his goodness and happiness, and do forget at times, unworthy supplicant! the prayers I should have offered for myself. Never fear that I will disparage my kind religious teacher, by disobedience to my husband in the most trying duties.

*Ascham.* Gentle is he, gentle and virtuous: but time will harden him: time must harden even thee, sweet Jane! Do thou, complacently and indirectly, lead him from ambition.

*Jane.* He is contented with me and with home.

*Ascham.* Ah Jane! Jane! men of high estate grow tired of contentedness.

*Jane.* He told me he never liked books unless I read them to him: I will read them to him every evening: I will open new worlds to him richer than those discovered by the Spaniard: I will conduct him to treasures, O what treasures: on which he may sleep in innocence and peace.

*Ascham.* Rather do thou walk with him, ride with him,

play with him, be his faery, his page, his everything that love and poetry have invented ; but watch him well ; sport with his fancies ; turn them about like the ringlets round his cheek ; and if ever he meditate on power, go toss up thy baby to his brow, and bring back his thoughts into his heart by the music of thy discourse.

Teach him to live unto God and unto thee ; and he will discover that women, like the plants in woods, derive their softness and tenderness from the shade.—*Imaginary Conversations.*

## LVI.

### THOMAS DE QUINCEY.

1785—1859.

THOMAS DE QUINCEY was born at Manchester in 1785. In 1800 he went to Eton, and in 1803 he was entered at Oxford, where he studied intermittently for the space of five years. While yet a very young man he adopted the baneful practice of opium eating, and thus shipwrecked both his fine intellect and his fortune. After encountering some of those strange adventures which he commemorates, and perhaps embellishes, in his *Confessions of an Opium Eater*, he retired from London and became for some time a resident in the Lake Country, near his friends Wordsworth and Southey. De Quincey did not turn to literature except as an amusement until he was nearly forty, when pecuniary embarrassments induced him to become a contributor to the *London Magazine* and other periodicals. In 1832 he went to reside in Scotland, living at Edinburgh for the most part, in the seclusion which his taste no less than his feeble health required, until his death, which took place in 1859.

De Quincey is one of the most eloquent prose writers of the nineteenth century. His best passages will bear comparison with those of Milton, Taylor, or Hooker : they have the same gorgeous music, the same passionate abundance of thought. He is an unreliable critic, an erratic writer, an unscrupulous inventor of history, but as a rhetorician he is almost unrivalled.

The records of his learning and controversial power may pass with other curiosities and fleeting interests of the age ; but the



dreams and phantasies he has connected with the earlier epoch of his life, his solemn rhapsodies, the simple pathos of his best sketches, and the bright flashes of his humour are imperishable memorials of a peculiar genius.


### 1. A Sister's Death.

FROM the gorgeous sunlight I turned round to the corpse. There lay the sweet childish figure ; there the angel face ; and, as people usually fancy, it was said in the house that no features had suffered any change. Had they not ? The forehead indeed—the serene and noble forehead—*that* might be the same ; but the frozen eyelids, the darkness that seemed to steal from beneath them, the marble lips, the stiffening hands, laid palm to palm, as if repeating the supplications of closing anguish—could these be mistaken for life ? Had it been so wherefore did I not spring to those heavenly lips with tears and never-ending kisses ? But so it was *not*. I stood checked for a moment ; awe, not fear, fell upon me ; and whilst I stood a solemn wind began to blow—the saddest that ear ever heard. It was a wind that might have swept the fields of mortality for a thousand centuries. Many times since, upon summer days, when the sun is about the hottest, I have remarked the same wind arising and uttering the same hollow, solemn, Memnonian but saintly swell : it is in this world the one great audible symbol of eternity. And three times in my life have I happened to hear the same sound in the same circumstances, viz., when standing between an open window and a dead body on a summer day. Instantly, when my ear caught this vast Æolian intonation, when my eye filled with the golden fulness of life, the pomps of the heavens

above, or the glory of the flowers below, and turning when it settled upon the frost which overspread my sister's face, instantly a trance fell upon me. A vault seemed to open in the zenith of the far blue sky, a shaft which ran up for ever. I, in spirit, rose as if on billows that also ran up the shaft for ever: and the billows seemed to pursue the throne of God; but that also ran before us, and fled away continually. The flight and the pursuit seemed to go on for ever and ever. Frost gathering frost, some Sarsaparilla wind of death, seemed to repel me: some mighty relation between God and death dimly struggled to evolve itself from the dreadful antagonism between them; shadowy meanings even yet continue to exercise and torment, in dreams, the deciphering oracle within me. I slept—for how long I cannot say; slowly I recovered my self-possession; and when I woke, found myself standing, as before, close to my sister's bed.—  
*Autobiographic Sketches.* •

## 2. Joan of Arc.

WHAT is to be thought of her? What is to be thought of the poor shepherd girl from the hills and forests of Lorraine, that—like the Hebrew shepherd boy from the hills and forests of Judæa—rose suddenly out of the quiet, out of the safety, out of the religious inspiration, rooted in deep pastoral solitudes, to a station in the van of armies, and to the more perilous station at the right hand of kings? The Hebrew boy inaugurated his patriotic mission by an act, by a victorious act, such as no man could deny. But so did the girl of Lorraine, if we read her story as it was read by those who saw her nearest. Adverse armies bore witness to the boy as no pretender; but so they did to the gentle girl. Judged by the voices of all who saw them from a station of good-



will, both were found true and loyal to any promises involved in their first acts. Enemies it was that made the difference between their subsequent fortunes. The boy rose to a splendour and a noonday prosperity, both personal and public, that rang through the records of his people, and became a by-word amongst his posterity for a thousand years, until the sceptre was departing from Judah. The poor, forsaken girl, on the contrary, drank not herself from that cup of rest which she had secured for France. She never sang together with the songs that rose in her native Domrémy, as echoes to the departing steps of invaders. She mingled not in the festal dances at Vaucouleurs which celebrated in rapture the redemption of France. No! for her voice was then silent: no! for her feet were dust. Pure, innocent, noble-hearted girl! whom, from earliest youth, ever I believed in as full of truth and self-sacrifice, this was amongst the strongest pledges for thy truth, that never once—no, not for a moment of weakness—didst thou revel in the vision of coronets and honour from man. Coronets for thee! O no! Honours, if they come when all is over, are for those that share thy blood. Daughter of Domrémy, when the gratitude of thy king shall awaken, thou wilt be sleeping the sleep of the dead. Call her, King of France, but she will not hear thee! Cite her by thy apparitors to come and receive a robe of honour, but she will be found *en contumace*. When the thunders of universal France, as even yet may happen, shall proclaim the grandeur of the poor shepherd girl that gave up all for her country, thy ear, young shepherd girl, will have been deaf for five centuries. To suffer and to do, that was thy portion in this life; that was thy destiny; and not for a moment was it hidden from thyself. Life, thou saidst, is short: and the sleep which is in the grave is long! Let me use that life, so transitory, for

the glory of those heavenly dreams destined to comfort the sleep which is so long. This pure creature—pure from every suspicion of even a visionary self-interest, even as she was pure in senses more obvious—never once did this holy child, as regarded herself, relax from her belief in the darkness that was travelling to meet her. She might not prefigure the very manner of her death; she saw not in vision, perhaps, the aerial altitude of the fiery scaffold, the spectators without end on every road pouring into Rouen as to a coronation, the surging smoke, the volleying flames, the hostile faces all around, the pitying eye that lurked but here and there, until nature and imperishable truth broke loose from artificial restraints:—these might not be apparent through the mists of the hurrying future. But the voice that called her to death, *that* she heard for ever.—*Joan of Arc.*

### 3. On Murder.

GENTLEMEN,—I have had the honour to be appointed by your committee to the trying task of reading the Williams' Lecture on Murder, considered as one of the Fine Arts; a task which might be easy enough three or four centuries ago, when the art was little understood, and few great models had been exhibited; but in this age, when masterpieces of excellence have been executed by professional men, it must be evident, that in the style of criticism applied to them, the public will look for something of a corresponding improvement. Practice and theory must advance *pari passu*. People begin to see that something more goes to the composition of a fine murder than two blockheads to kill and be killed—a knife—a purse—and a dark lane. Design, gentlemen, grouping, light and shade, poetry, sentiment, are now deemed indispensable to attempts of this nature. . . .

Before I begin, let me say a word or two to certain prigs who affect to speak of our society as if it were in some degree immoral in its tendency. Immoral! Jupiter protect me, gentlemen, what is it that people mean? I am for morality, and always shall be, and for virtue, and all that; and I do affirm, and always shall (let what will come of it), that murder is an improper line of conduct, highly improper; and I do not stick to assert, that any man who deals in murder, must have very incorrect ways of thinking, and truly inaccurate principles; and so far from aiding and abetting him by pointing out his victim's hiding-place, as a great moralist of Germany declared it to be every good man's duty to do, I would subscribe one shilling and sixpence to have him apprehended, which is more by eighteenpence than the most eminent moralists have hitherto subscribed for that purpose. But what then? Everything in this world has two handles. Murder, for instance, may be laid hold of by its moral handle (as it generally is in the pulpit, and at the Old Bailey); and *that*, I confess, is its weak side; or it may also be treated *æsthetically*, as the Germans call it—that is, in relation to good taste. . . .

In these assassinations of princes and statesmen, there is nothing to excite our wonder; important changes often depend on their deaths; and, from the eminence on which they stand, they are peculiarly exposed to the aim of every artist who happens to be possessed by the craving for scenical effect. But there is another class of assassinations, which has prevailed from an early period of the seventeenth century, that really *does* surprise me; I mean the assassination of philosophers. For, gentlemen, it is a fact, that every philosopher of eminence for the two last centuries has either been murdered, or, at the least, been very near it; insomuch, that if a man calls himself a philo-

sopher, and never had his life attempted, rest assured there is nothing in him; and against Locke's philosophy in particular, I think it an unanswerable objection (if we needed any), that, although he carried his throat about with him in this world for seventy-two years, no man ever condescended to cut it. As these cases of philosophers are not much known, and are generally good and well composed in their circumstances, I shall here read an excursus on that subject, chiefly by way of showing my own learning. . . .

Hobbes—but why, or on what principle, I never could understand—was not murdered. This was a capital oversight of the professional men in the seventeenth century; because in every light he was a fine subject for murder, except, indeed, that he was lean and skinny; for I can prove that he had money, and (what is very funny) he had no right to make the least resistance; since, according to himself, irresistible power creates the very highest species of right, so that it is rebellion of the blackest dye to refuse to be murdered, when a competent force appears to murder you. However, gentlemen, though he was not murdered, I am happy to assure you that (by his own account) he was three times very near being murdered, which is consolatory. . . .

It is now time that I should say a few words about the principles of murder, not with a view to regulate your practice, but your judgment: as to old women, and the mob of newspaper readers, they are pleased with anything, provided it is bloody enough. But the mind of sensibility requires something more. *First*, then, let us speak of the kind of person who is adapted to the purpose of the murderer; *secondly*, of the place where; *thirdly*, of the time when, and other little circumstances.

As to the person, I suppose it is evident that he ought to be a good man; because, if he were not, he might himself, by possibility, be contemplating murder at the very time; and such 'diamond-cut-diamond' tussles, though pleasant enough where nothing better is stirring, are really not what a critic can allow himself to call murders. . . .

The subject chosen ought to be in good health: for it is absolutely barbarous to murder a sick person, who is usually quite unable to bear it. . . . A philosophic friend, well known for his philanthropy and general benignity, suggests that the subject chosen ought also to have a family of young children wholly dependent on his exertions, by way of deepening the pathos. And, undoubtedly, this is a judicious caution. Yet I would not insist too keenly on such a condition. Severe good taste unquestionably suggests it; but still, where the man was otherwise objectionable in point of morals and health, I would not look with too curious a jealousy to a restriction, which might have the effect of narrowing the artist's sphere.

So much for the person. As to the time, the place, and the tools, I have many things to say, which at present I have no room for. The good sense of the practitioner has usually directed him to night and privacy. Yet there have not been wanting cases where this rule was departed from with excellent effect. . . . But first, confidentially, allow me to say what my real principles are upon the matter in question.

As to murder, I never committed one in my life. It's a well-known thing amongst all my friends. I can get a paper to certify as much, signed by lots of people. Indeed, if you come to that, I doubt whether many people could produce as strong a certificate! Mine would be as big as a breakfast tablecloth. . . . 'But,' say you, 'if no

murderer, you may have encouraged, or even have be-spoken a murder.' No, upon my honour—no. And that was the very point I wished to argue for your satisfaction. The truth is, I am a very particular man in everything relating to murder; and perhaps I carry my delicacy too far. . . . Genius may do much, but long study of the art must always entitle a man to offer advice. So far I will go—general principles I will suggest. But as to any particular case, once for all I will have nothing to do with it. Never tell me of any special work of art you are meditating—I set my face against it *in toto*. For, if once a man indulges himself in murder, very soon he comes to think little of robbing; and from robbing he comes next to drinking and Sabbath-breaking, and from that to incivility and procrastination. Once begin upon this downward path, you never know where you are to stop. Many a man has dated his ruin from some murder or other that perhaps he thought little of at the time. *Principiis obsta*—that's my rule. Such was my speech, and I have always acted up to it; so, if that is not being virtuous, I should be glad to know what is.—*On Murder considered as one of the Fine Arts.*

#### 4. Flight of the Kalmuck Khan and his People.

THERE is no great event in modern history, or, perhaps it may be said more broadly, none in all history, from its earliest records, less generally known, or more striking to the imagination, than the flight eastwards of a principal Tartar nation across the boundless *steppes* of Asia in the latter half of the last century. The *terminus à quo* of this flight, and the *terminus ad quem*, are equally magnificent; the mightiest of Christian thrones being the one, the mightiest of Pagan the other. And the grandeur of these



two terminal objects is harmoniously supported by the romantic circumstances of the flight. In the abruptness of its commencement, and the fierce velocity of its execution, we read the wild barbaric character of those who conducted the movement. In the unity of purpose connecting this myriad of wills, and in the blind but unerring aim at a mark so remote, there is something which recalls to the mind those almighty instincts that propel the migrations of the swallow and the leeming, or the life-withering marches of the locust. . . . Precisely on the 5th of January, the day so solemnly appointed under religious sanctions by the Lama, the Kalmucks on the east bank of the Wolga were seen at the earliest dawn of day assembling by troops and squadrons, and in the tumultuous movement of some great morning of battle. Tens of thousands continued moving off the ground at every half-hour's interval. Women and children, to the amount of two hundred thousand and upwards, were placed upon waggons, or upon camels, and drew off by masses of twenty thousand at once—placed under suitable escorts, and continually swelled in numbers by other outlying bodies of the horde, who kept falling in at various distances upon the first and second day's march. . . .

The first point to be reached, before any hope of repose could be encouraged, was the river Jaik. This was not above 300 miles from the main point of departure on the Wolga; and if the march thither was to be a forced one, and a severe one, it was alleged, on the other hand, that the suffering would be the more brief and transient; one summary exertion, not to be repeated, and all was achieved. Forced the march was, and severe beyond example: there the forewarning proved correct; but the promised rest proved a mere phantom of the wilderness—a visionary rainbow,

which fled before their hope-sick eyes, across these interminable solitudes, for seven months of hardship and calamity, without a pause. These sufferings, by their very nature, and the circumstances under which they arose, were (like the scenery of the steppes) somewhat monotonous in their colouring and external features. . . .

The first stage, we have already said, was from the Wolga to the Jaik; the distance about 300 miles; the time allowed seven days. For the first week, therefore, the rate of marching averaged about 43 English miles a day. The weather was cold, but bracing; and, at a more moderate pace, this part of the journey might have been accomplished without much distress by a people as hardy as the Kalmucks: as it was, the cattle suffered greatly from over-driving; milk began to fail even for the children; the sheep perished by wholesale; and the children themselves were saved only by the innumerable camels. . . .

Universal consternation was diffused through the wide borders of the Khan's encampment by this disastrous intelligence [the inroad of the Cossacks]; not so much on account of the numbers slain, or the total extinction of a powerful ally, as because the position of the Cossack force was likely to put to hazard the future advances of the Kalmucks, or at least to retard and hold them in check until the heavier columns of the Russian army should arrive upon their flanks. The siege of Koulagina was instantly raised; and that signal, so fatal to the happiness of the women and their children, once again resounded through the tents—the signal for flight, and this time for a flight more rapid than ever. . . .

Dreadful were the feelings of the poor women on hearing this exposition of the case. For they easily understood that too capital an interest (the *summa rerum*) was now at stake, to allow of any regard to minor interests, or what

would be considered such in their present circumstances. The dreadful week already passed—their inauguration in misery—was yet fresh in their remembrance. The scars of suffering were impressed not only upon their memories, but upon their very persons and the persons of their children. And they knew, that where no speed had much chance of meeting the cravings of the chieftains, no test would be accepted, short of absolute exhaustion, that as much had been accomplished as could have been accomplished. Weseloff, the Russian captive, has recorded the silent wretchedness with which the women and elder boys assisted in drawing the tent ropes. On the 5th of January all had been animation, and the joyousness of indefinite expectation; now, on the contrary, a brief but bitter experience had taught them to take an amended calculation of what it was that lay before them.

One whole day and far into the succeeding night had the renewed flight continued; the sufferings had been greater than before; for the cold had been more intense; and many perished out of the living creatures through every class, except only the camels—whose powers of endurance seemed equally adapted to cold and to heat. The second morning, however, brought an alleviation to the distress. Snow had begun to fall; and though not deep at present, it was easily foreseen that it soon would be so; and that, as a halt would in that case become unavoidable, no plan could be better than that of staying where they were; especially as the same cause would check the advance of the Cossacks. Here then was the last interval of comfort which gleamed upon the unhappy nation during their whole migration. For ten days the snow continued to fall with little intermission. At the end of that time keen bright frosty weather succeeded; the drifting had ceased; in three days the smooth expanse

became firm enough to support the treading of the camels ; and the flight was recommenced. . . . In their speed lay their only hope—in strength of foot, as before, and not in strength of arm. Onward, therefore, the Kaimucks pressed, marking the lines of their wide extending march over the sad solitudes of the steppes by a never-ending chain of corpses. The old and the young, the sick man on his couch, the mother with her baby—all were dropping fast. Sights such as these, with the many rueful aggravations incident to the helpless condition of infancy—of disease and of female weakness abandoned to the wolves amidst a howling wilderness, continued to track their course through a space of full two thousand miles ; for so much, at the least, it was likely to prove, including the circuits to which they were often compelled by rivers or hostile tribes, from the point of starting on the Wolga, until they could reach their destined halting ground on the east bank of the Torgau. For the first seven weeks of this march their sufferings had been embittered by the excessive severity of the cold ; and every night—so long as wood was to be had for fires, either from the lading of the camels, or from the desperate sacrifice of their baggage-waggons, or (as occasionally happened) from the forests which skirted the banks of the many rivers which crossed their path—no spectacle was more frequent than that of a circle, composed of men, women, and children, gathered by hundreds round a central fire, all dead and stiff at the return of morning light. Myriads were left behind from pure exhaustion, of whom none had a chance, under the combined evils which beset them, of surviving through the next twenty-four hours. Frost, however, and snow at length ceased to persecute ; the vast extent of the march at length brought them into more genial latitudes, and the unusual duration of the march was gradually bringing

them into more genial seasons of the year. Two thousand miles had at last been traversed; February, March, April, were gone; the balmy month of May had opened, vernal sights and sounds came from every side to comfort the heart-weary travellers; and at last, in the latter end of May, crossing the Torgau, they took up a position where they hoped to find liberty to repose themselves for many weeks in comfort as well as in security, and to draw such supplies from the fertile neighbourhood as might restore their shattered forces to a condition for executing, with less of wreck and ruin, the large remainder of the journey.—*The Revolt of the Tartars.*

### 5. A Dream.

I WAS standing, as it seemed to me, at the door of my own cottage. Right before me lay the very scene which could really be commanded from that situation, but exalted, as was usual, and solemnised by the power of dreams. There were the same mountains, and the same lovely valley at their feet; but the mountains were raised to more than Alpine height, and there was interspace far larger between them of savannahs and forest lawns; the hedges were rich with white roses; and no living creature was to be seen, excepting that in the green churchyard there were cattle tranquilly reposing upon the verdant graves. . . . I gazed upon the well-known scene, and I said to myself, 'It yet wants much of sunrise; and it is Easter Sunday; and that is the day on which they celebrate the first-fruits of Resurrection. I will walk abroad; old griefs shall be forgotten to-day: for the air is cool and still, and the hills are high, and stretch away to heaven; and the churchyard is as verdant as the forest lawns, and the forest lawns are as quiet as the churchyard; and with the dew I can wash

the fever from my forehead; and then I shall be unhappy no longer.' I turned, as if to open my garden gate, and immediately I saw upon the left a scene far different; but which yet the power of dreams had reconciled into harmony. The scene was an oriental one; and, there also it was Easter Sunday, and very early in the morning. And at a vast distance were visible, as a stain upon the horizon, the domes and cupolas of a great city—an image or faint abstraction, caught perhaps in childhood from some picture of Jerusalem. . . .

Then suddenly would come a dream of far different character—a tumultuous dream—commencing with a music such as now I often heard in sleep—music of preparation and of awakening suspense. The undulations of fast-gathering tumults were like the opening of the Coronation Anthem; and, like *that*, gave the feeling of a multitudinous movement, of infinite cavalcades filing off, and the tread of innumerable armies. The morning was come of a mighty day—a day of crisis and of ultimate hope for human nature, then suffering mysterious eclipse, and labouring in some dread extremity. Somewhere, but I knew not where—somehow, but I knew not how—by some beings, but I knew not by whom—a battle, a strife, an agony, was travelling through all its stages—was evolving itself, like the catastrophe of some mighty drama, with which my sympathy was the more insupportable, from deepening confusion as to its local scene, its cause, its nature, and its undecipherable issue. I (as is usual in dreams where, of necessity, we make ourselves central to every movement) had the power, and yet had not the power, to decide it. I had the power, if I could raise myself to will it; and yet again had not the power, for the weight of twenty Atlantics was upon me, or the oppression of inexpressible guilt. 'Deeper

than ever plummet sounded,' I lay inactive. Then, like a chorus, the passion deepened. Some greater interest was at stake, some mightier cause, than ever yet the sword had pleaded, or trumpet had proclaimed. Then came sudden alarms; hurrying to and fro, trepidations of innumerable fugitives; I knew not whether from the good cause or the bad; darkness and lights; tempest and human faces; and at last, with the sense that all was lost, female forms, and the features that were worth all the world to me; and but a moment allowed—and clasped hands, with heart-breaking partings, and then—everlasting farewells! and, with a sigh such as the caves of hell sighed when the incestuous mother uttered the abhorred name of Death, the sound was reverberated—everlasting farewells! and again, and yet again reverberated—everlasting farewells!

And I awoke in struggles, and cried aloud, 'I will sleep no more!'—*Confessions of an English Opium Eater.*

## LVII.

### SIR WILLIAM NAPIER.

1785—1860.

SIR WILLIAM NAPIER, one of the distinguished family of that name, was born in 1785 at Celbridge, in Ireland, where his father was then quartered. He was descended on his father's side from John Napier, the inventor of logarithms. His mother was Lady Sarah Lennox, known in the early history of George III for the homage yielded by him to her beauty. His school education was limited to that given in the grammar school of Celbridge, but he was more fortunate in the intercourse which his home provided for him with persons of powerful character and sound culture.

At fourteen he received his first commission. His earliest foreign service was in the expedition against Copenhagen in 1807. In 1808 he went to Spain with Sir John Moore, and, except when severely wounded and invalided home, served in the Peninsula to the end of the war, during which he reached the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel. In 1848 he was created a K.C.B., and became General shortly before his death, which took place in 1860.

Sir William Napier shares the renown of his brothers and cousin for courage and humanity of the heroic type, combined with a vehemence of nature which sometimes marred their best purposes. His chivalrous generosity, his daring courage—at times betrayed into fierce controversy—his unblemished purity of life, make him a pattern of an English soldier. 'He was the handsomest man I ever saw,' was the testimony of one who, without knowing who he was, saved his life in Spain by a draught of cooling beverage.



His chief literary production is the history of the great war in which he was an actor. The vivid reality of the record and the dignity and force of his descriptions, inspired chiefly by knowledge and pure love of the army with which he served, have given to Napier's *History of the War in the Peninsula* the incontestable supremacy which it now possesses. His style is equally remarkable for its perspicuity and the vigour of its English, rising at times into passages of the finest historical eloquence.

### 1. The Close of the Battle of Albuera.

SUCH a gallant line, issuing from the midst of the smoke and rapidly separating itself from the confused and broken multitude, startled the enemy's heavy masses, which were increasing and pressing onwards as to an assured victory: they wavered, hesitated, and then vomiting forth a storm of fire, hastily endeavoured to enlarge their front, while a fearful discharge of grape from all their artillery whistled through the British ranks. Myers was killed, Cole, the three colonels, Ellis, Blackeney, and Hawkshawe, fell wounded, and the fusileer battalions, struck by the iron tempest, reeled and staggered like sinking ships. But suddenly and sternly recovering they closed on their terrible enemies; and then was seen with what a strength and majesty the British soldier fights. In vain did Soult with voice and gesture animate his Frenchmen; in vain did the hardiest veterans break from the crowded columns and sacrifice their lives to gain time for the mass to open out on such a fair field; in vain did the mass itself bear up, and fiercely striving, fire indiscriminately upon friends and foes, while the horsemen hovering on the flank threatened to charge the advancing line. Nothing could stop that astonishing in-

fantry. No sudden burst of undisciplined valour, no nervous enthusiasm weakened the stability of their order, their flashing eyes were bent on the dark columns in their front, their measured tread shook the ground, their dreadful volleys swept away the head of every formation, their deafening shouts overpowered the dissonant cries that broke from all parts of the tumultuous crowd, as slowly and with a horrid carnage it was pushed by the incessant vigour of the attack to the farthest edge of the height. There the French reserve mixed with the struggling multitude and endeavoured to sustain the fight, but the effort only increased the irremediable confusion, the mighty mass gave way and like a loosened cliff went headlong down the steep: the rain flowed after in streams discoloured with blood, and eighteen hundred unwounded men, the remnant of six thousand unconquerable British soldiers, stood triumphant on the fatal hill!—*History of the War in the Peninsula.*

## 2. The British Infantry.

THAT the British infantry soldier is more robust than the soldier of any other nation can scarcely be doubted by those who, in 1815, observed his powerful frame distinguished amidst the united armies of Europe; and notwithstanding his habitual excess in drinking, he sustains fatigue and wet, and the extremes of cold and heat, with incredible vigour. When completely disciplined, and three years are required to accomplish this, his port is lofty and his movements free, the whole world cannot produce a nobler specimen of military bearing, nor is the mind unworthy of the outward man. He does not indeed possess that presumptuous vivacity which would lead him to dictate to his commanders, or even to censure real errors although he may

perceive them; but he is observant and quick to comprehend his orders, full of resources under difficulties, calm and resolute in danger, and more than usually obedient and careful of his officers in moments of imminent peril.

It has been asserted that his undeniable firmness in battle is the result of a phlegmatic constitution uninspired by moral feeling. Never was a more stupid calumny uttered! Napoleon's troops fought in bright fields where every helmet caught some beams of glory, but the British soldier conquered under the cold shade of aristocracy, no honours awaited his daring, no despatch gave his name to the applauses of his countrymen, his life of danger and hardship was uncheered by hope, his death unnoticed. Did his heart sink therefore? Did he not endure with surpassing fortitude the sorest of ills, sustain the most terrible assaults in battle unmoved, overthrowing with incredible energy every opponent, and at all times prove, that while no physical military qualification was wanting, the fount of honour was also full and fresh within him!

The result of a hundred battles and the united testimony of impartial writers of different nations have given the first place amongst the European infantry to the British; but in a comparison between the troops of France and England, it would be unjust not to admit that the cavalry of the former stands higher in the estimation of the world.—*History of the War in the Peninsula.*

### 3. Sir John Moore.

From the spot where he fell, the general was carried to the town by his soldiers; his blood flowed fast and the torture of the wound was great; yet the unshaken firmness of his mind made those about him, seeing the resolution of his

courtenance, express a hope of his recovery: he looked steadfastly at the injury for a moment, and said, '*No, I feel that to be impossible.*' Several times he caused his attendants to stop and turn round, that he might behold the field of battle; and when the firing indicated the advance of the British, he discovered his satisfaction and permitted the bearers to proceed. When brought to his lodgings the surgeons examined his wound, there was no hope. the pain increased, he spoke with difficulty. At intervals he asked if the French were beaten, and addressing his old friend, Colonel Anderson, said, '*You know I always wished to die this way*'. Again he asked if the enemy were defeated, and being told they were, said, '*It is a great satisfaction to me to know we have beaten the French.*' His countenance continued firm, his thoughts clear, once only when he spoke of his mother he became agitated; but he often inquired after the safety of his friends, and the officers of his staff, and he did not even in this moment forget to recommend those whose merit had given them claims to promotion. When life was just extinct, with an unsubdued spirit, as if anticipating the baseness of his posthumous calumniators, he exclaimed, '*I hope the people of England will be satisfied! I hope my country will do me justice!*' In a few minutes afterwards he died, and his corpse, wrapped in a military cloak, was interred by the officers of his staff in the citadel of Coruña. The guns of the enemy paid his funeral honours, and Soult with a noble feeling of respect for his valour raised a monument to his memory on the field of battle.

Thus ended the career of Sir John Moore, a man whose uncommon capacity was sustained by the purest virtue, and governed by a disinterested patriotism more in keeping with the primitive than the luxurious age of a great nation. His tall graceful person, his dark searching eyes, strongly defined

forehead, and singularly expressive mouth, indicated a noble disposition and a refined understanding. The lofty sentiments of honour habitual to his mind, were adorned by a subtle playful wit, which gave him in conversation an ascendancy he always preserved by the decisive vigour of his actions. He maintained the right with a vehemence bordering upon fierceness, and every important transaction in which he was engaged increased his reputation for talent, and confirmed his character as a stern enemy to vice, a steadfast friend to merit, a just and faithful servant of his country. The honest loved him, the dishonest feared him. For while he lived he did not shun, but scorned and spurned the base, and with characteristic propriety they spurned at him when he was dead.

A soldier from his earliest youth, Moore thirsted for the honours of his profession. He knew himself worthy to lead a British army, and hailed the fortune which placed him at the head of the troops destined for Spain. As the stream of time passed the inspiring hopes of triumph disappeared, but the austerer glory of suffering remained, and with a firm heart he accepted that gift of a severe fate. Confident in the strength of his genius, he disregarded the clamours of presumptuous ignorance. Opposing sound military views to the foolish projects so insolently thrust upon him by the ambassador, he conducted his long and arduous retreat with sagacity, intelligence, and fortitude; no insult disturbed, no falsehood deceived him, no remonstrance shook his determination; fortune frowned without subduing his constancy; death struck, but the spirit of the man remained unbroken when his shattered body scarcely afforded it a habitation. Having done all that was just towards others, he remembered what was due to himself. Neither the shock of the mortal blow, nor the lingering hours of acute pain which

preceded his dissolution, could quell the pride of his gallant heart, or lower the dignified feeling with which, conscious of merit, he at the last moment asserted his right to the gratitude of the country he had served so truly.

If glory be a distinction, for such a man death is not a leveller!—*History of the War in the Peninsula.*

#### 4. Wellington.

WELLINGTON'S campaigns furnish lessons for generals of all nations, but they must always be especial models for British commanders in future continental wars; because he modified and reconciled the great principles of art with the peculiar difficulties which attend generals controlled by politicians who prefer parliamentary intrigue to national interests. An English commander must not trust his fortune. He dare not risk much, however conscious he may be of personal resources, when one disaster will be his ruin at home; his measures must be subordinate to this primary consideration. Wellington's caution, springing from that source, has led friends and foes alike into wrong conclusions as to his system of war; the French call it want of enterprise, timidity; the English have denominated it the Fabian system. These are mere phrases. His system was the same as that of all great generals. He held his army in hand, keeping it with unmitigated labour always in a fit state to march or to fight, and acted indifferently as occasion offered on the offensive or defensive, displaying in both a complete mastery of his art. Sometimes he was indebted to fortune, sometimes to his natural genius, always to his untiring industry, for he was emphatically a painstaking man.

That he was less vast in his designs, less daring in execution, neither so rapid nor so original a commander as Napoleon, must be admitted; and being later in the field of glory

it is to be presumed he learned something of the art from that greatest of all masters. Yet something besides the difference of genius must be allowed for the difference of situation; Napoleon was never, even in his first campaign in Italy, so harassed by the French as Wellington was by the English, Spanish and Portuguese governments: their systems of war were however alike in principle, their operations being only modified by their different political positions. Great bodily exertion, unceasing watchfulness, exact combinations to protect their flanks and communications without scattering their forces; these were common to both; in defence firm, cool, enduring, in attack fierce and obstinate; daring when daring was politic, yet always operating by the flanks in preference to the front; in these things they were alike: in following up a victory the English general fell short of the French emperor. The battle of Wellington was the stroke of a battering-ram, down went the wall in ruins; the battle of Napoleon was the swell and dash of a mighty wave before which the barrier yielded and the roaring flood poured onwards covering all.

But there was nothing of timidity or natural want of enterprise to be discerned in the English general's campaigns. Neither was he of the Fabian school. He recommended that commander's system to the Spaniards, he did not follow it himself; his military policy more resembled that of Scipio Africanus. . . .

To say that he committed faults is only to say that he made war; to deny him the qualities of a great commander is to rail against the clear mid-day sun for want of light. How few of his combinations failed! How many battles he fought, victorious in all! Iron hardihood of body, a quick and sure vision, a grasping mind, untiring power of thought, and the habit of laborious minute investigation and arrangement; all

these qualities he possessed, and with them that most rare faculty of coming to prompt and sure conclusions on sudden emergencies. This is the certain mark of a master-spirit in war; without it a commander may be distinguished, he may be a great man, he cannot be a great captain: where troops nearly alike in arms and knowledge are opposed, the battle generally turns upon the decision of the moment.—*History of the War in the Peninsula.*

### 5. England and France.

ENGLAND and France! I have called them two great nations. The expression is feeble. They are the two greatest nations in the world. Others may hereafter equal, perhaps surpass them; I know not what may be in the womb of time; but in arts, in arms, in learning, in genius, in power, and in renown, they are now unmatched. Their quarrels have heretofore shaken the world, producing great calamity and incalculable evil; their friendship must therefore necessarily produce incalculable good. Sir, we all recollect, and some of us have mingled in the dreadful struggle, the terrible combat, which was so fairly and gallantly fought out on the fields of Spain, between the illustrious Duke of Wellington and the great French captain [Soul] who now sits here your honoured guest. Then all hearts were bent on mischief, all arms nerved for destruction. The trumpet blast of war had gone forth, and those two men, by nature kind and compassionate—I speak from experience—I know them both, and from both have I had proof of a benevolent and kindly nature; those two men met stern and wrathful of mood, they met eager to slay or to be slain, and at their backs stood myriads as stern and wrathful as themselves. Yes, the man who now sits before you, so calm, so gentle of demeanour, could and did—I have seen



him do it—the glory of his country called for it—and with a wave of his hand he has sent a hundred thousand armed men rushing with the might of giants to the fight. And oh ! it was a dreadful though a glorious sight to a soldier, to see a French army coming down with the terrors of the tempest, darkness, and fire combined, to waste a field of battle. What followed this field of blood, this widespread carnage ? Why, tears and wailings from thousands and tens of thousands of widowed mothers and fatherless children ; tears and wailing, misery and despair ; for these are the fruits of war. But now, what do we behold ? The same men, then so fierce and desperate of mood, meeting with fronts serene and hearts purged and cleansed of angry passions, grasping the offered hand in all the warmth of friendship, amidst the glad shoutings of joyful millions which have replaced the cries of bereaved women and children. They are the fruits, the truly glorious fruits of peace. Peace then, I say, profound and lasting peace, between France and England ! And what was it that arrayed the two great men of whom I have just spoken in deadly opposition to each other ? Why did they direct their mighty energies to the destruction of their species, passing like the destroying angel over prostrate nations ? The glory of their country's arms ! Well, it is a stirring sound for the brave man's ears ; it makes the warrior lift his crest ; it is the soldier's boast. But, gentlemen, it makes the fairer and better part of creation moan. It is a cry which carries desolation to the heart of woman ; for war is a devouring fire which consumes in its course man and man's works and woman's happiness together ; the hour of war is the hour of destruction, of hatred, of every evil passion ; but the hour of peace is that of general joy, the hour of production and of blessed regeneration.—*Speech at Birmingham, 1838.*

## LVIII.

### THOMAS ARNOLD.

1795--1842.

THOMAS ARNOLD, born in 1795, was educated at Winchester. From school he went to Oxford, where he was elected to a Scholarship at Corpus Christi College, and afterwards to a Fellowship at Oriel, at that time the most distinguished Society in the University. In 1818 he took Orders, and for nine years lived in the country as a private tutor. In 1828 he was appointed to the Head Mastership of Rugby School, the duties of which he discharged till his death with great and memorable success. In 1841 he was made Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford, but had only delivered a single course of lectures, when he died suddenly at Rugby, June 12, 1842. He published several volumes of School Sermons, a well-known edition of Thucydides, a *Roman History* (which was intended to be continued to the time of Charlemagne, but at his death had only advanced as far as the latter years of the Second Punic War), a volume of *Introductory Lectures on Modern History*, and some pamphlets on political and ecclesiastical topics.

Dr. Arnold's style underwent the same change which Lord Macaulay notes as having taken place in the style of Bacon, and also in that of Burke—a change from an almost bare simplicity to considerable richness and fulness, rising at times to a high order of eloquence. He is not always careful in the construction of his sentences, and most of his writings betray signs of haste. But he has a freshness of feeling and a glow of moral enthusiasm which impart beauty as well as force to his style, and far more than atone for occasional prolixity and negligence of expression.

## 1. Niebuhr.

Nothing is more unjust than the vague charge sometimes brought against Niebuhr, that he has denied the reality of all the early history of Rome. On the contrary, he has rescued from the dominion of scepticism much which less profound inquirers had before too hastily given up to it; he has restored and established far more than he has overthrown. Ferguson finds no sure ground to rest on till he comes to the second Punic war; in his view, not only the period of the kings and the first years of the commonwealth, but the whole of two additional centuries,—not only the wars with the Æquians and Volscians, but those with the Gauls, the Samnites, and even with Pyrrhus,—are involved in considerable uncertainty. The progress of the constitution he is content to trace in the merest outline; particular events, and still more particular characters, appear to him to belong to poetry or romance rather than to history. Whereas Niebuhr maintains that a true history of Rome, with many details of dates, places, events, and characters, may be recovered from the beginning of the commonwealth. It has been greatly corrupted and disguised by ignorant and uncritical writers, but there exist, he thinks, sufficient materials to enable us, not only to get rid of these corruptions, but to restore that genuine and original edifice, which they have so long overgrown and hidden from our view. And accordingly, far from passing over hastily, like Ferguson, the period from the expulsion of Tarquinius to the first Punic war, he has devoted to it somewhat more than two large volumes; and from much, that to former writers seemed a hopeless chaos, he has drawn a living picture of events and institutions, as rich in its colouring, as perfect in its composition, as it is faithful to the truth of nature.

Were I indeed to venture to criticise the work of this great man, I should be inclined to charge him with having overvalued rather than undervalued the possible certainty of the early history of the Roman commonwealth. He may seem in some instances rather to lean too confidently on the authority of the ancient writers, than to reject it too indiscriminately. But let no man judge him hastily, till by long experience in similar researches he has learnt to estimate sufficiently the instinctive power of discerning truth, which even ordinary minds acquire by constant practice. In Niebuhr, practice combined with the natural acuteness of his mind, brought this power to a perfection which has never been surpassed. It is not caprice, but a most sure instinct, which has led him to seize on some particular passage of a careless and ill-informed writer, and to perceive in it the marks of most important truth; while on other occasions he has set aside the statements of this same writer, with no deference to his authority whatever. To say that his instinct is not absolutely infallible, is only to say that he was a man; but he who follows him most carefully and thinks over the subject of his researches most deeply, will find the feeling of respect for his judgment continually increasing, and will be more unwilling to believe what Niebuhr doubted, or to doubt what he believed.—*History of Rome.*

## 2. Reflections on the Sufferings of the Roman Commons after the Retreat of the Gauls.

BUT the prospect at home was not overclouded merely; it was the very deepest darkness of misery. It has been well said that long periods of general suffering make far less impression on our minds, than the short sharp struggle in

which a few distinguished individuals perish ; not that we over-estimate the horror and the guilt of times of open bloodshedding, but we are much too patient of the greater misery and greater sin of periods of quiet legalized oppression ; of that most deadly of all evils, when law, and even religion herself, are false to their divine origin and purpose, and their voice is no longer the voice of God, but of his enemy. In such cases the evil derives advantage, in a manner, from the very amount of its own enormity. No pen can record, no volume can contain, the details of the daily and hourly sufferings of a whole people, endured without intermission, through the whole life of man, from the cradle to the grave. The mind itself can scarcely comprehend the wide range of the mischief : how constant poverty and insult, long endured as the natural portion of a degraded caste, bear with them to the sufferers something yet worse than pain, whether of the body or the feelings ; how they dull the understanding and poison the morals ; how ignorance and ill-treatment combined are the parents of universal suspicion ; how from oppression is produced habitual cowardice, breaking out when occasion offers into merciless cruelty ; how slaves become naturally liars ; how they, whose condition denies them all noble enjoyments, and to whom looking forward is only despair, plunge themselves with a brute's recklessness into the lowest sensual pleasures ; how the domestic circle, itself, the last sanctuary of human virtue, becomes at length corrupted, and in the place of natural affection and parental care, there is to be seen only selfishness and unkindness, and no other anxiety on the part of the parents for their children, than that they may, by fraud or by violence, prey in their turn upon that society which they have found their bitterest enemy. Evils like these, long working in the heart of a nation, render their own cure impossible : a revolution

may execute judgment on one generation, and that perhaps the very one which was beginning to see and to repent of its inherited sins ; but it cannot restore life to the morally dead ; and its ill success, as if in this line of evils no curse should be wanting, is pleaded by other oppressors as a defence of their own iniquity, and a reason for perpetuating it for ever. — *History of Rome.*

### 3. The state of Roman Society.

THE members of the country tribes, of those at least which had been created within the last century, lived on their lands, and probably only went up to Rome to vote at the elections, or when any law of great national importance was proposed and there was a powerful party opposed to its enactment. They were also obliged to appear on the Capitol on the day fixed by the consuls for the enlistment of soldiers for the legions. Law business might also call them up to Rome occasionally, and the Roman games, or any other great festival, would no doubt draw them thither in great numbers. With these exceptions, and when they were not serving in the legions, they lived on their small properties in the country ; their business was agriculture, their recreations were country sports, and their social pleasures were found in the meetings of their neighbours at seasons of festival ; at these times there would be dancing, music, and often some pantomimic acting, or some rude attempts at dramatic dialogue, one of the simplest and most universal amusements of the human mind. This was enough to satisfy all their intellectual craving ; of the beauty of painting, sculpture, or architecture, of the charms of eloquence and of the highest poetry, of the deep interest which can be excited by inquiry into the causes of all the wonders around

us and within us, of some of the highest and most indispensable enjoyments of an Athenian's nature, the agricultural Romans of the fifth century had no notion whatsoever.

But it was not possible that an equal simplicity should have existed at Rome. Their close and constant intercourse with other men sharpens and awakens the faculties of the inhabitants of cities; and country sports being by the necessity of the case denied to them, they learn earlier to value such pleasures as can be supplied by the art or genius of man. Besides, the conduct of political affairs on a large scale, much more when these affairs are publicly discussed either in a council or in a popular assembly, cannot but create an appreciation of intellectual power of eloquence; and the multiplied transactions of civil life, leading perpetually to disputes, and these disputes requiring a legal decision, a knowledge of law became a valuable accomplishment, and the study of law, which is as wholesome to the human mind as the practice of it is often injurious, was naturally a favourite pursuit with those who had leisure, and who wished either to gain influence or to render services. Thus the family of the Claudii seem always to have aspired after civil rather than military distinction. Appius Claudius, the censor, was a respectable soldier, but he is much better known by his great public works and by his speech against making peace with Pyrrhus, than by his achievements in war; nay, it is said, that his plebeian colleague in the consulship, L. Volumnius, taunted him with his legal knowledge and his eloquence, as if he could only talk and not fight. The Claudii, however, were distinguished by their high nobility, independently of any personal accomplishments; but the family of the Coruncanii owed its celebrity entirely, so far as appears, to their acquaintance with the law. Ti.

Coruncanius was consul with P. Lævinus in the year when Pyrrhus came into Italy, and was named dictator more than thirty years afterwards for the purpose of holding the comitia. He left no writings behind him, but was accustomed to the very latest period of his life to give answers on points of law to all that chose to consult him; and his reputation was so high that he was the first plebeian who was ever appointed to the dignity of pontifex maximus. The Ogulnii also appear to have been a family distinguished for knowledge and accomplishments. Two brothers of this name were, as we have seen, the authors of the law which threw open the offices of augur and pontifex to the commons, and afterwards in their ædileship they ornamented the city with several works of art; and one of them, besides his embassy to Epidaurus, already noticed, was sent as one of three ambassadors to Ptolemy Philadelphus, king of Egypt, soon after the retreat of Pyrrhus from Italy.—*History of Rome.*

#### 4. Hannibal and the Power of Rome.

Twice in history has there been witnessed the struggle of the highest individual genius against the resources and institutions of a great nation; and in both cases the nation has been victorious. For seventeen years Hannibal strove against Rome; for sixteen years Napoleon Buonaparte strove against England: the efforts of the first ended in Zama, those of the second in Waterloo.

True it is, as Polybius has said, that Hannibal was supported by the zealous exertions of Carthage; and the strength of the opposition to his policy has been very possibly exaggerated by the Roman writers. But the zeal of his country in the contest, as Polybius himself remarks in another place,



was ~~his~~ the work of his family. Never did great men more show themselves the living spirit of a nation than Hamilcar, and Hasdrubal, and Hannibal, during a period of nearly fifty years, approved themselves to be to Carthage. It is not then merely through our ignorance of the internal state of Carthage, that Hannibal stands so prominent in all our conceptions of the second Punic war: he was really its moving and directing power; and the energy of his country was but a light reflected from his own. History therefore gathers itself into his single person: in that vast tempest, which from north and south, from the west and the east, broke upon Italy, we see nothing but Hannibal.

But if Hannibal's genius may be likened to the Homeric god, who in his hatred of the Trojans rises from the deep to rally the fainting Greeks and to lead them against the enemy, so the calm courage with which Hector met his more than human adversary in his country's cause is no unworthy image of the unyielding magnanimity displayed by the aristocracy of Rome. As Hannibal utterly eclipses Carthage, so on the contrary Fabius, Marcellus, Claudius Nero, even Scipio himself, are as nothing when compared to the spirit, and wisdom, and power of Rome. The senate which voted its thanks to its political enemy Varro, after his disastrous defeat, 'because he had not despaired of the Commonwealth,' and which disdained either to solicit, or to reprove, or to threaten, or in any way to notice the twelve colonies which had refused their accustomed supplies of men for the army, is far more to be honoured than the conqueror of Zama. This we should the more carefully bear in mind, because our tendency is to admire individual greatness far more than national; and as no single Roman will bear comparison with Hannibal, we are apt to murmur at the event of the contest, and to think that the victory was

awarded to the least worthy of the combatants. On the contrary, never was the wisdom of God's providence more manifest than in the issue of the struggle between Rome and Carthage. It was clearly for the good of mankind, that Hannibal should be conquered: his triumph would have stopped the progress of the world. For great men can only act permanently by forming great nations; and no one man, even though it were Hannibal himself, can in one generation effect such a work. But where the nation has been merely enkindled for a while by a great man's spirit, the light passes away with him who communicated it; and the nation, when he is gone, is like a dead body, to which magic power had for a moment given an unnatural life: when the charm has ceased, the body is cold and stiff as before. He who grieves over the battle of Zama, should carry on his thoughts to a period thirty years later, when Hannibal must in the course of nature have been dead, and consider how the isolated Phœnician city of Carthage was fitted to receive and to consolidate the civilization of Greece, or by its laws and institutions to bind together barbarians of every race and language into an organized empire, and prepare them for becoming, when that empire was dissolved, the free members of the commonwealth of Christian Europe.—*History of Rome.*

### 5. Scipio.

A MIND like Scipio's, working its way under the peculiar influences of his time and country, cannot but move irregularly; it cannot but be full of contradictions. Two hundred years later, the mind of the dictator Cæsar acquiesced contentedly in Epicureanism: he retained no more of enthusiasm than was inseparable from the intensity

of his intellectual power and the fervour of his courage, even amidst his utter moral degradation. But Scipio could not be like Cæsar. His mind rose above the state of things around him; his spirit was solitary and kingly; he was cramped by living among those as his equals, whom he felt fitted to guide as from some higher sphere; and he retired at last to Litternum to breathe freely, to enjoy the simplicity of childhood, since he could not fulfil his natural calling to be a hero king. So far he stood apart from his countrymen, admired, revered, but not loved. But he could not shake off all the influences of his time; the virtue, public and private, which still existed at Rome, the reverence paid by the wisest and best men to the religion of their fathers, were elements too congenial to his nature, not to retain their hold on it: they cherished that nobleness of soul in him, and that faith in the invisible and divine, which two centuries of growing unbelief rendered almost impossible in the days of Cæsar. Yet how strange must the conflict be, when faith is combined with the highest intellectual power, and its appointed object is no better than Paganism! Longing to believe, yet repelled by palpable falsehood, crossed inevitably with snatches of unbelief, in which hypocrisy is ever close at the door, it breaks out desperately, as it may seem, into the region of dreams and visions, and mysterious communings with the invisible, as if longing to find that food in its own creations, which no outward objective truth offers to it. The proportions of belief and unbelief in the human mind in such cases, no human judgment can determine: they are the wonders of history; characters inevitably misrepresented by the vulgar, and viewed even by those who in some sense have the key to them as a mystery, not fully to be comprehended, and still less explained to others. The genius

which conceived the incomprehensible character of Hannibal, would alone be able to describe with intuitive truth the character of Scipio or of Cromwell.—*History of Rome*.

### 6. The Treasures of History.

ENOUGH has been said, I think, to show that history contains no mean treasures: that as being the biography of a nation, it partakes of the richness and variety of those elements which make up a nation's life. Whatever there is of greatness in the final cause of all human thought and action, God's glory and man's perfection, that is the measure of the greatness of history. Whatever there is of variety and intense interest in human nature,—in its elevation, whether proud as by nature or sanctified as by God's grace: in its suffering, whether blessed or unblessed, a martyrdom or a judgment; in its strange reverses, in its varied adventures, in its yet more varied powers, its courage and its patience, its genius and its wisdom, its justice and its love,—that also is the measure of the interest and variety of history. The treasures indeed are ample; but we may more reasonably fear whether we may have strength and skill to win them.—*Inaugural Lecture on the Study of Modern History*, 1841.

## LIX.

### THOMAS BABINGTON LORD MACAULAY.

1800—1859.

THOMAS BABINGTON MACAULAY was born in 1800, and died in 1859.

He early became eminent both as a politician and as a writer. He entered Parliament in 1830, was a member of the Legislative Council of India from 1834 to 1838, and twice after his return to England (1839 and 1847) sat in the Cabinet. He was raised to the Peccage in 1857.

His main literary works are his *History of England*, his *Essays*, and his *Lays of Ancient Rome*. The *History*, of which four volumes were published during his lifetime (1848-55), and one after his death, is merely a fragment of the work he had intended to produce.

Macaulay's style is the perfection of clearness. Not an ambiguous sentence is to be found throughout his works. His writings are distinguished by great vigour, and are rendered attractive, even when dealing with subjects dry in themselves, by pointed antithesis and by profuse illustration.

His style alone would have insured his popularity, but his success as a writer was increased by other causes. From the circumstances of his life, he wrote of politics, and especially of English politics, with the advantage rarely possessed by modern literary men, of having taken an active part in public life. Hence he writes of English history with a knowledge and sympathy which cannot be gained merely from books. He had the art of clothing in the most brilliant language the views generally prevalent in his time. His opinions were almost always the opinions

of the vast majority of his readers, expressed in the most forcible and striking words.

His deficiencies are closely connected with his merits. His style itself, though perfectly clear, is wanting in compression, and is occasionally overburdened with illustrations. His arguments, though expressed with vigour, are not always convincing, and are rarely original. His views of politics and history, and the arguments by which he supports them, are the views and arguments of the Whig writers with whom he associated. Even in his treatment of English history, he follows in the footsteps of Hallam. He has, in short, both the merits and the defects natural to a writer who employs the whole force of a powerful mind and imagination in supporting and illustrating the opinions of the sensible and liberal persons of his generation.

### 1. The Puritans.

WE would speak first of the Puritans, the most remarkable body of men, perhaps, which the world has ever produced. The odious and ridiculous parts of their character lie on the surface. He that runs may read them; nor have there been wanting attentive and malicious observers to point them out. For many years after the restoration, they were the theme of unmeasured invective and derision. They were exposed to the utmost licentiousness of the press and of the stage, at the time when the press and the stage were most licentious. They were not men of letters; they were, as a body, unpopular: they could not defend themselves; and the public would not take them under its protection. They were therefore abandoned, without reserve, to the tender mercies of the satirists and dramatists. The ostentatious simplicity of their dress, their sour aspect, their nasal twang, their stiff posture, their long graces, their Hebrew names, the Scriptural phrases

which they introduced on every occasion, their contempt of human learning, their detestation of polite amusements, were indeed fair game for the laughers. But it is not from the laughers alone that the philosophy of history is to be learnt. And he who approaches this subject should carefully guard against the influence of that potent ridicule which has already misled so many excellent writers.

Those who roused the people to resistance, who directed their measures through a long series of eventful years, who formed, out of the most unpromising materials, the finest army that Europe had ever seen, who trampled down King, Church, and Aristocracy, who, in the short intervals of domestic sedition and rebellion, made the name of England terrible to every nation on the face of the earth, were no vulgar fanatics. Most of their absurdities were mere external badges, like the signs of freemasonry, or the dresses of friars. We regret that these badges were not more attractive. We regret that a body to whose courage and talents mankind has owed inestimable obligations had not the lofty elegance which distinguished some of the adherents of Charles the First, or the easy good-breeding for which the court of Charles the Second was celebrated. But, if we must make our choice, we shall, like Bassanio in the play, turn from the specious caskets which contain only the Death's head and the Fool's head, and fix on the plain leaden chest which conceals the treasure.

The Puritans were men whose minds had derived a peculiar character from the daily contemplation of superior beings and eternal interests. Not content with acknowledging, in general terms, an overruling Providence, they habitually ascribed every event to the will of the Great Being, for whose power nothing was too vast, for whose inspection nothing was too minute. To know him, to serve him, to

enjoy him, was with them the great end of existence. They rejected with contempt the ceremonious homage which other sects substituted for the pure worship of the soul. Instead of catching occasional glimpses of the Deity through an obscuring veil, they aspired to gaze full on his intolerable brightness, and to commune with him face to face. Hence originated their contempt for terrestrial distinctions. The difference between the greatest and the meanest of mankind seemed to vanish, when compared with the boundless interval which separated the whole race from him on whom their own eyes were constantly fixed. They recognised no title to superiority but his favour; and, confident of that favour, they despised all the accomplishments and all the dignities of the world. If they were unacquainted with the works of philosophers and poets, they were deeply read in the oracles of God. If their names were not found in the registers of heralds, they were recorded in the Book of Life. If their steps were not accompanied by a splendid train of menials, legions of ministering angels had charge of them. Their palaces were houses not made with hands; their diadems crowns of glory which should never fade away. On the rich and the eloquent, on nobles and priests, they looked down with contempt: for they esteemed themselves rich in a more precious treasure, and eloquent in a more sublime language, nobles by the right of an earlier creation, and priests by the imposition of a mightier hand. The very meanest of them was a being to whose fate a mysterious and terrible importance belonged, on whose slightest action the spirits of light and darkness looked with anxious interest, who had been destined, before heaven and earth were created, to enjoy a felicity which should continue when heaven and earth should have passed away. Events which short-sighted politicians ascribed to earthly causes, had been ordained on his account.



For his sake empires had risen, and flourished, and decayed. For his sake the Almighty had proclaimed his will by the pen of the Evangelist, and the harp of the prophet. He had been wrested by no common deliverer from the grasp of no common foe. He had been ransomed by the sweat of no vulgar agony, by the blood of no earthly sacrifice. It was for him that the sun had been darkened, that the rocks had been rent, that the dead had risen, that all nature had shuddered at the sufferings of her expiring God.

Thus the Puritan was made up of two different men, the one all self-abasement, penitence, gratitude, passion, the other proud, calm, inflexible, sagacious. He prostrated himself in the dust before his Maker: but he set his foot on the neck of his king. In his devotional retirement, he prayed with convulsions, and groans, and tears. He was half-maddened by glorious or terrible illusions. He heard the lyres of angels or the tempting whispers of fiends. He caught a gleam of the Beatific Vision, or woke screaming from dreams of everlasting fire. Like Vane, he thought himself intrusted with the sceptre of the millennial year. Like Fleetwood, he cried in the bitterness of his soul that God had hid his face from him. But when he took his seat in the council, or girt on his sword for war, these tempestuous workings of the soul had left no perceptible trace behind them. People who saw nothing of the godly but their uncouth visages, and heard nothing from them but their groans and their whining hymns, might laugh at them. But those had little reason to laugh who encountered them in the hall of debate or in the field of battle. These fanatics brought to civil and military affairs a coolness of judgment and an immutability of purpose which some writers have thought inconsistent with their religious zeal, but which were in fact the necessary effects of it. The intensity of their

feelings on one subject made them tranquil on every other. One overpowering sentiment had subjected to itself pity and hatred, ambition and fear. Death had lost its terrors and pleasure its charms. They had their smiles and their tears, their raptures and their sorrows, but not for the things of this world. Enthusiasm had made them Stoics, had cleared their minds from every vulgar passion and prejudice, and raised them above the influence of danger and of corruption. It sometimes might lead them to pursue unwise ends, but never to choose unwise means. They went through the world, like Sir Artegal's iron man Talus with his flail, crushing and trampling down oppressors, mingling with human beings, but having neither part nor lot in human infirmities, insensible to fatigue, to pleasure, and to pain, not to be pierced by any weapon, not to be withstood by any barrier.—*History of England.*

## 2. The Trial of Warren Hastings.

THERE have been spectacles more dazzling to the eye, more gorgeous with jewellery and cloth of gold, more attractive to grown-up children, than that which was then exhibited at Westminster; but, perhaps, there never was a spectacle so well calculated to strike a highly cultivated, a reflecting, an imaginative mind. All the various kinds of interest which belong to the near and to the distant, to the present and to the past, were collected on one spot, and in one hour. . . . Every step in the proceedings carried the mind either backward, through many troubled centuries, to the days when the foundations of our constitution were laid; or far away, over boundless seas and deserts, to dusky nations living under strange stars, worshipping strange gods, and writing strange characters from right to left. The High Court of Parliament was to

sit, according to forms handed down from the days of the Plantagenets, on an Englishman accused of exercising tyranny over the lord of the holy city of Benares, and over the ladies of the princely house of Oude.

The place was worthy of such a trial. It was the great hall of William Rufus, the hall which had resounded with acclamations at the inauguration of thirty kings, the hall which had witnessed the just sentence of Bacon and the just absolution of Somers, the hall where the eloquence of Strafford had for a moment awed and melted a victorious party inflamed with just resentment, the hall where Charles had confronted the High Court of Justice with the placid courage which has half redeemed his fame. Neither military nor civil pomp was wanting. The avenues were lined with grenadiers. The streets were kept clear by cavalry. The peers, robed in gold and ermine, were marshalled by the heralds under Garter King-at-arms. The judges in their vestments of state attended to give advice on points of law. . . . The grey old walls were hung with scarlet. The long galleries were crowded by an audience such as has rarely excited the fears or the emulation of an orator. There were gathered together, from all parts of a great, free, enlightened, and prosperous empire, grace and female loveliness, wit and learning, the representatives of every science and of every art. There were seated round the Queen the fair-haired young daughters of the house of Brunswick. There the Ambassadors of great Kings and Commonwealths gazed with admiration on a spectacle which no other country in the world could present. There Siddons, in the prime of her majestic beauty, looked with emotion on a scene surpassing all the imitations of the stage. There the historian of the Roman Empire thought of the days when Cicero pleaded the cause of Sicily

against Verres, and when, before a senate which still retained some show of freedom, Tacitus thundered against the oppressor of Africa. There were seen, side by side, the greatest painter and the greatest scholar of the age. The spectacle had allured Reynolds from that easel which has preserved to us the thoughtful foreheads of so many writers and statesmen, and the sweet smiles of so many noble matrons. It had induced Parr to suspend his labours in that dark and profound mine from which he had extracted a vast treasure of erudition, a treasure too often buried in the earth, too often paraded with injudicious and inelegant ostentation, but still precious, massive, and splendid. There appeared the voluptuous charms of her to whom the heir of the throne had in secret plighted his faith. There too was she, the beautiful mother of a beautiful race, the Saint Cecilia whose delicate features, lighted up by love and music, art has rescued from the common decay. There were the members of that brilliant society which quoted, criticized, and exchanged repartees, under the rich peacock-hangings of Mrs. Montague. And there the ladies whose lips, more persuasive than those of Fox himself, had carried the Westminster election against palace and treasury, shone round Georgiana Duchess of Devonshire.

The Sergeants made proclamation. Hastings advanced to the bar, and bent his knee. The culprit was indeed not unworthy of that great presence. He had ruled an extensive and populous country, and made laws and treaties, had sent forth armies, had set up and pulled down princes. And in his high place he had so borne himself, that all had feared him, that most had loved him, and that hatred itself could deny him no title to glory, except virtue. He looked like a great man, and not like a bad man. A person small and emaciated, yet deriving

dignity from a carriage which, while it indicated deference to the court, indicated also habitual self-possession and self-respect, a high and intellectual forehead, a brow pensive, but not gloomy, a mouth of inflexible decision, a face pale and worn, but serene, on which was written, as legibly as under the picture in the council-chamber at Calcutta, *Mens æqua in arduis* ; such was the aspect with which the great proconsul presented himself to his judges. . . .

But neither the culprit nor his advocates attracted so much notice as the accusers. In the midst of the blaze of red drapery, space had been fitted up with green benches, and tables for the Commons. The managers, with Burke at their head, appeared in full dress. The collectors of gossip did not fail to remark that even Fox, generally so regardless of his appearance, had paid to the illustrious tribunal the compliment of wearing a bag and sword. Pitt had refused to be one of the conductors of the impeachment ; and his commanding, copious, and sonorous eloquence was wanting to that great muster of various talents. Age and blindness had unfitted Lord North for the duties of a public prosecutor ; and his friends were left without the help of his excellent sense, his tact, and his urbanity. But, in spite of the absence of these two distinguished members of the Lower House, the box in which the managers stood contained an array of speakers such as perhaps had not appeared together since the great age of Athenian eloquence. There were Fox and Sheridan,\* the English Demosthenes and the English Hyperides. There was Burke, ignorant, indeed, or negligent of the art of adapting his reasonings and his style to the capacity and taste of his hearers, but in amplitude of comprehension and richness of imagination superior to every orator, ancient or modern. There, with eyes reverentially fixed on Burke, appeared the finest

## **LORD MACAULAY.**

gentleman of the age, his form developed by every manly exercise, his face beaming with intelligence and spirit, the ingenious, the chivalrous, the high-souled Windham. Nor, though surrounded by such men, did the youngest manager pass unnoticed. At an age when most of those who distinguished themselves in life are still contending for prizes and fellowships at college, he had won for himself a conspicuous place in parliament. No advantage of fortune or connection was wanting that could set off to the height his splendid talents and his unblemished honour. At twenty-three he had been thought worthy to be ranked with the veteran statesmen who appeared as the delegates of the British Commons, at the bar of the British nobility. All who stood at that bar, save him alone, are gone, culprit, advocates, accusers. To the generation which is now in the vigour of life, he is the sole representative of a great age which has passed away. But those who, within the last ten years, have listened with delight, till the morning sun shone on the tapestries of the House of Lords, to the lofty and animated eloquence of Charles Earl Grey, are able to form some estimate of the powers of a race of men among whom he was not the foremost.—*Critical and Historical Essays.*

### **3. The Death of Argyle.**

NEITHER the ignominious\* procession up the High Street, nor the near view of death, had power to disturb the gentle and majestic patience of Argyle. His fortitude was tried by a still more severe test. A paper of interrogatories was laid before him by order of the Privy Council. He replied to those questions\*to which he could reply without danger to any of his friends, and refused to say more. He was told

### *LORD MACAULAY.*

that unless he returned fuller answers he should be put to the torture. James, who was doubtless sorry that he could not feast his own eyes with the sight of Argyle in the boots, sent down to Edinburgh positive orders that nothing should be omitted which could wring out of the traitor information against all who had been concerned in the treason. But menaces were vain. With torments and death in immediate prospect, Mac Callum More thought far less of himself than of his poor clansmen. 'I was busy this day,' he wrote from his cell, 'treating for them, and in some hopes. But this evening orders came that I must die upon Monday or Tuesday; and I am to be put to the torture if I answer not all questions upon oath. Yet I hope God shall support me.'

The torture was not inflicted. Perhaps the magnanimity of the victim had moved the conquerors to unwonted compassion. He himself remarked that at first they had been very harsh to him, but that they soon began to treat him with respect and kindness. God, he said, had melted their hearts. It is certain that he did not, to save himself from the utmost cruelty of his enemies, betray any of his friends. On the last morning of his life he wrote these words: 'I have named none to their disadvantage. I thank God he hath supported me wonderfully.'

He composed his own epitaph, a short poem, full of meaning and spirit, simple and forcible in style, and not contemptible in versification.\* In this little piece he complained that, though his enemies had repeatedly decreed his death, his friends had been still more cruel. A comment on these expressions is to be found in a letter which he addressed to a lady residing in Holland. She had furnished him with a large sum of money for his expedition, and he thought her entitled to a full explana-

tion of the causes which had led to his failure. <sup>9</sup>He acquitted his coadjutors of treachery, but described <sup>b</sup>their folly, their ignorance, and their factious perverseness, in terms which their own testimony has since proved to have been richly deserved. He afterwards doubted whether he had not used language too severe to become "a dying Christian, and, in a separate paper, begged his friend to suppress what he had said of these men. 'Only this I must acknowledge,' he mildly added, 'they were not governable.'

Most of his few remaining hours were passed in devotion, and in affectionate intercourse with some members of his family. He professed no repentance on account of his last enterprise, but bewailed, with great emotion, his former complacence in spiritual things with the pleasure of the government. He had, he said, been justly punished. One who had so long been guilty of cowardice and dissimulation was not worthy to be the instrument of salvation to the State and Church. Yet the cause, he frequently repeated, was the cause of God, and would assuredly triumph. 'I do not,' he said, 'take on myself to be a prophet. But I have a strong impression on my spirit, that deliverance will come very suddenly.' It is not strange that some zealous Presbyterians should have laid up his saying in their hearts, and should, at a later period, have attributed it to divine inspiration.

So effectually had religious faith and hope, co-operating with natural courage and equanimity, composed his spirits, that, on the very day on which he was to die, he dined with appetite, conversed with gaiety at table, and, after his last meal, lay down, as he was wont, to take a short slumber, in order that his body and mind might be in full vigour when he should mount the scaffold. At this time one of



the Lords of the Council, who had probably been bred a Presbyterian, and had been seduced by interest to join in oppressing the Church of which he had once been a member, came to the Castle with a message from his brethren, and demanded admittance to the Earl. It was answered that the Earl was asleep. The Privy Councillor thought that this was a subterfuge, and insisted on entering. The door of the cell was softly opened; and there lay Argyle on the bed, sleeping in his irons, the placid sleep of infancy. The conscience of the renegade smote him. He turned away sick at heart, ran out of the Castle, and took refuge in the dwelling of a lady of his family who lived hard by. There he flung himself on a couch, and gave himself up to an agony of remorse and shame. His kinswoman, alarmed by his looks and groans, thought that he had been taken with sudden illness, and begged him to drink a cup of sack. 'No, no,' he said, 'that will do me no good.' She prayed him to tell her what had disturbed him. 'I have been,' he said, 'in Argyle's prison. I have seen him within an hour of eternity, sleeping as sweetly as ever man did. But as for me'—

And now the Earl had risen from his bed, and had prepared himself for what was yet to be endured. He was first brought down the High Street to the Council House, where he was to remain during the short interval which was still to elapse before the execution. During that interval he asked for pen and ink, and wrote to his wife: 'Dear heart, God is unchangeable: He hath always been good and gracious to me; and no place alters it. Forgive me all my faults; and now comfort thyself in Him, in whom only true comfort is to be found. The Lord be with thee, bless and comfort thee, my dearest. Adieu.'—*History of England.*

**4. The Burial-place of Monmouth.**

In the meantime, many handkerchiefs were dipped in the duke's blood ; for by a large part of the multitude he was regarded as a martyr who had died for the Protestant religion. The head and body were placed in a coffin covered with black velvet, and were laid privately under the communion table of St. Peter's Chapel in the Tower. Within four years the pavement of that chancel was again disturbed, and hard by the remains of Monmouth were laid the remains of Jeffreys. In truth, there is no sadder spot on the earth than that little cemetery. Death is there associated, not, as in Westminster Abbey and Saint Paul's, with genius and virtue, with public veneration and with imperishable renown ; not, as in our humblest churches and churchyards, with everything that is most endearing in social and domestic charities ; but with whatever is darkest in human nature and human destiny, with the savage triumph of implacable enemies, with the inconstancy, the ingratitude, the cowardice of friends, with all the miseries of fallen greatness and of blighted fame. Thither have been carried, through successive ages, by the rude hands of gaolers, without one mourner following, the bleeding relics of men who had been the captains of armies, the leaders of parties, the oracles of senates, and the ornaments of courts. Thither was borne, before the window where Jane Grey was praying, the mangled corpse of Guildford Dudley. Edward Seymour, Duke of Somerset, and Protector of the realm, reposes there by the brother whom he murdered. There has mouldered away the headless trunk of John Fisher, Bishop of Rochester and Cardinal of Saint Vitalis, a man worthy to have lived in a better age, and to have died in a better cause. There are laid John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland, Lord High

**LORD MACAULAY.**

Admiral, and Thomas Cromwell, Earl of Essex, Lord High Treasurer. There, too, is another Essex, on whom nature and fortune had lavished all their bounties in vain, and whom valour, grace, genius, royal favour, popular applause, conducted to an early and ignominious doom. Not far off sleep two chiefs of the great house of Howard, Thomas, fourth Duke of Norfolk, and Philip;<sup>4</sup> eleventh Earl of Arundel. Here and there, among the thick graves of unquiet and aspiring statesmen, lie more delicate sufferers; Margaret of Salisbury, the last of the proud name of Plantagenet, and those two fair queens who perished by the jealous rage of Henry. Such was the dust with which the dust of Monmouth mingled.—*History of England.*

